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THE MOSAIC ERA.

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PRINCETON
THEOLOGICAL
SEMINARY

PREFACE.

THESE studies of the sacred records of the Mosaic era are on the same plan as a series formerly issued by the author on "The Ages before Moses." As explained in the preface to the former volume, that plan was "the result of an attempt to combine the advantages of the expository and topical methods, and at the same time to secure the benefit of *continuous* exposition, without wearying and discouraging those who have not time to dwell on details." The attempt has also been made to exhibit the *perspective* of the history; so that not the mere number of the chapters or verses, but the relative importance of the matter, should determine the space given to the exposition, regard also being had to the element of time. This will account for the rapid manner in which some parts of the sacred text are passed over, compared with the attention given to others. Care has been taken to avoid the temptation of merely selecting topics for illustration; the constant aim has been to present in outline, and in their organic relations, the salient features of the entire series of Scriptures which gives us the history of the times of Moses.

The critical questions affecting the date, authorship, and integrity of the books, which are so much agitated at the present time, do not come within the scope of this volume. It is hoped, however, that, though no attempt is made to deal directly with a subject which demands separate and special treatment, these expositions, by calling attention to the coherence, compactness, and close organic relations of the different books, and to the manifest unity of the whole, may tend in some degree to aid in the solution of the questions suggested by "the higher criticism."

The author has a profound conviction, which the studies resulting in this volume have greatly confirmed, that the value of the Old Testament Scriptures for spiritual edification is greater than is generally supposed even by Christian people. The prejudice against what is called "spiritualizing" is carried by many so far, that "the spirit" is lost altogether, and only "the letter" remains. The rejecting of the spiritual significance of the Hebrew records is only what is to be expected on the part of those who deny the spiritual altogether; but it does seem unaccountable that so many who acknowledge the paramount authority in things spiritual of Christ and His apostles, should nevertheless disregard such plain statements as these: "All these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition"; "Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have

hope"; and so completely forget the emphatic warning given in reference to this very subject, "the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life."

With regard to the acknowledged danger of license in the doctrine of types, it is important to remember that it is the prevailing ignorance on the subject which gives it scope. The true way to meet the extravagance of fanciful interpretation, is not to abandon the field to it by avoiding the subject, but diligently to cultivate it in the interests of truth and reason. On the same principle many of the vagaries of modern ritualism are traceable to the want of education on the subject of the rites of the ancient Church and the light thrown upon them in the New Testament. "We venture to assert," says Cave, and we believe truly, "that it is because so little has been heard of late in Protestant pulpits of the Christian doctrines of priesthood and sacrifice, that the Romish exaggerations of those truths have found a house ready swept and garnished for their reception."*

The numerous testimonies to the usefulness of the previous volume which have reached the author, have encouraged him to hope that its successor will not be entirely unwelcome, and that with all its imperfections it may be of some service to students of the Bible.

ST. JOHN'S WOOD,
LONDON, *April*, 1881.

* "The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice," p. 25.

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I.

ISRAEL IN EGYPT.

EXODUS I.

WE have before us a study in sacred history: the times of Moses the great Law-giver of Israel. It may be well first to consider the relation of this period to the whole of which it is a part.

If we understand sacred history in the largest sense, then the ages of creation which are manifestly referred to in the Epistle to the Hebrews (i. 2; xi. 3),* may be considered as belonging to it; and throughout these vast reaches of time which preceded the advent of man upon the earth, we recognise the working of the Eternal Word†, who in the end of a later age (Hebrew ix. 26), "appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." But taking a more limited and familiar view of sacred history, we may consider it as including those successive ages or dispensations of Divine mercy and grace, which the fall of man rendered necessary, for the purpose of rescuing him from sin, delivering him from the sorrow it entailed, and preparing him for the lofty destiny which, according to the constitution of his nature, and the loving purpose of the God who made him, is in store for him.

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* The word is *αἰῶνας*, not worlds, as in our version, but *ages*.

† See also John i. 3; Col. i. 16.

The first age, or dispensation, begins with the promise given to Adam and Eve immediately after the fall; and closes with the judgment of the flood. The second begins with the promise given to Noah, as he stood with his rescued family around an altar reared upon the land from which the waters of the flood had just receded; and closes with the judgment of the Babel dispersion. The third age begins with the call of Abraham, and is going on still. It differs from the previous ages or dispensations by the introduction of the new principle of separation,* as distinguished from the general offer of mercy which had been previously made once and again to all mankind. Its characteristic call is: "Come ye out and be separate." That call was first addressed to Abraham as the head of a family: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house" (Gen. xii. 1). It was afterwards addressed to the nation of Israel, when God "called His Son out of Egypt" (Exod. iv. 22, and Hosea xi. 1). In its final form it is addressed to men of all nations and climes, and this is the tenor of it: "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord; and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

Thus we have successively, within the third age, three divisions, covering respectively the era of the separate family (patriarchal times); of the separate nation (the times of Israel); and of the separate church (the "times

* See a previous work by the same author, entitled "The Ages before Moses," p. 159.

of the Gentiles"). The period before us evidently falls in the second of these divisions, that of the separate nation; and it covers the era of the founding of the nation. The time occupied is short, being all embraced, or nearly all, in the lifetime of a single man, that of Moses, who was, under God, the founder of the separate nation. But though the time is brief, the records are extensive, corresponding to the great importance of the period. Four books of the Bible are devoted to it: the Books of Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These will be our text-books in the study of the period.

Our subject has, or ought to have, a threefold interest: Historical, Evangelical, Personal.

First, *the Historical Interest.* No one can now deny that these books of Moses contain veritable history. In former times of ignorance a sceptic might take the position that the whole story was the invention of a later age. But no man of any intelligence can take this position now. The very stones, the mighty stones of Egypt, cry out against it. There is scarcely a sentence in the books of Moses about Egypt that does not find confirmation and illustration from the monuments of Egypt and the partially preserved papyrus rolls. So minute is the accuracy, that not only is the history proved to be authentic, but to be contemporaneous with the events it records.* The two histories—of Israel in the Bible—of Egypt as recovered from the monuments—lie alongside of each other, like two adjoining countries in a dissected

* See R. Stuart Poole, in *Contemporary Review*, March, 1879, p. 758.

map, which fit exactly the one into the other, clearly proving that they are fashioned out of one piece. And not only do the Bible and the monuments fit into each other with such wonderful exactness, but there are cases in which we can see in the one so manifestly the complement of the other, that it is just as if, on the dissected map which we have used for illustration, some name were written across the intersection, with the beginning of it on the Israel side, and the rest on the Egypt side, or *vice versa*.

Most conspicuously is this the case in the Bible account of Israel in Egypt in the time of the oppression, as compared with the abundant records of the reign of Rameses II., the great Sesostris of the Greek historians; so much so that the best of modern Egyptologists no longer express any doubt as to the identity of this well-known monarch with the Pharaoh of Israel's oppression. The very name Pharaoh, which at first created a difficulty, is now a confirmation; for while it has been proved to be a general term applied to all the monarchs of the Pharaonic dynasties, it was just in the reign of this monarch and his successor that it became so universal as to pass into a proper name. It is used on the monuments exactly as it is used in the Hebrew text. The same Pharaoh is known to be a mighty conqueror, the greatest of all the kings of Egypt, who exacted forced labor from his slaves on a vaster scale than ever had been done before. It is proved also from the monuments that, though belonging to a race of Theban kings, he fixed his capital, not at Thebes in the far south, but at Zoan or Tanis in the far north, in the very region where

the children of Israel had their centre of population, and at the very place which is spoken of in the Psalms as the scene of the marvels which were wrought at the time of the Exodus (Ps. lxxviii. 12, 43). And then, to crown all, the very treasure cities which are mentioned in this first chapter of Exodus, Pithom and Raamses, have been discovered and identified as the work of this same Pharaoh. So conclusive have these and other correspondences appeared, that we find so distinguished an authority as Brugsch-Bey saying: "The new Pharaoh who knew not Joseph, who adorned the city of Ramses, the capital of the Tanitic nome, and the city of Pithom, the capital of what was afterwards the Sethroitic nome, with temple cities, is no other, *can be no other*, than Rameses II., of whose buildings at Zoan the monuments and the Papyrus rolls speak in complete agreement."

With this identification as a fixed point, we can go back four hundred years, according to the Bible chronology, to the time of Joseph; and again, at the close of the Shepherd dynasty, which is proved by a wonderful memorial stone of the age of Rameses II., to have been just four hundred years before, we find a state of things exactly corresponding to that which is depicted in the closing chapters of Genesis, supplying all the conditions which are necessary to give the highest degree of probability to the history of Joseph as recorded there; and we can go forward to the reign of the immediate successor of Rameses II. and find the very character of the Pharaoh of the Exodus, and such a sudden cessation of the boastful strain of the monuments as to suggest the

suspicion of some great disaster, like that series of woes ending in complete overthrow, which is narrated in the book before us.

But we must not be tempted to spend too much time on these historical matters. They may come up again as we travel onward in our theme. Meantime, enough has surely been said to justify the claim which has been made of a deep historical interest in the subject before us.

Next, *the Evangelical Interest*. And here we have a double point of view. First, that of the plain history, viewed as a stage in the development of God's great plan of Redemption, leading on towards the fulness of the time when "God sent His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." This view is so obvious and so familiar, that I need not dwell on it.

But besides this, there is the unquestionable fact, recognized by all who have any spiritual insight into the Scriptures, that we have in the history before us, not only a preparation for the great Salvation which was to be unfolded in the latter times, but an illustration or series of illustrations of the great Salvation itself. This the Apostle Paul distinctly points out, when he says, "all these things happened to them for ensamples" (literally "types"); and our Lord Himself plainly suggests it, in such a passage as that in which He makes use of the lifting up of the serpent on the pole as a type of His own death; or again, when He connects so closely the old ordinance of the Passover with the new one of the Lord's Supper. This view of the history is quite familiar

too; but there is a thought which gives unity and consistency to the entire scheme of the third age, embracing all the three divisions of patriarchal, national, and church times, which has almost, if not altogether, escaped notice. Every one knows that the distinctive promise made to Abraham was the promise of a seed, and every one knows that while this promise had an immediate reference to Isaac, and a more distant reference to the seed of Israel as a nation, it had its final fulfilment in "the Seed of the woman," viz., Christ. But the precise manner in which these several fulfilments are connected together in continuity of development has been little regarded. It is capable of being exhibited in more than one point of view; but at present I shall take only one.

The promise to Abraham was the promise of a son. In the first generation Isaac was the son of promise to the exclusion of Ishmael, "as it is written 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called.'" In the next generation Jacob was the son of promise to the exclusion of Esau. In the third generation Joseph* had "the birthright" (see 1 Chron. v. 1, 2). Thus was the line of promise filled up in the patriarchal era. In the next, or national era, corresponding with the change of dispensation, we find the son no longer in an individual, but in the nation as a whole. Thus, Exod. iv. 22: "Israel is My son, even

* Joseph, though one of the twelve, in a certain sense stands by himself, "separated from his brethren" (Deut. xxxiii. 16). In the nation he is represented by his two sons, who rank after Judah, the ancestor of the Messiah. There was no tribe of Joseph. We may therefore regard him as one of "the patriarchs," in a sense in which his brethren were not.

My firstborn"; and again (Hosea xi. 1), "when Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt." Israel as a nation then, was the fourth son in the succession, and his history covers all the period of the national era. In the subsequent era we have *the* Son of Promise sent in the fulness of the time, to bless, not only Abraham's seed, but all the nations of the earth.

In view of this succession how natural it is to look for resemblances between the different sons of promise; how natural, especially, to find in the earlier ones typical prophecies of the Great one who was in the fulness of the time to come. In another place* I have shown how Isaac was a type of Christ as the Son of God; Jacob as the Son of man; Joseph as the "Saviour of the world," and "the Shepherd and Stone of Israel." In the same way it may be observed that the history of the "son" of the national era presented some features strikingly suggestive of the history of the Son of promise who was to come, such as these: the miraculous birth of the nation, its being called out of Egypt in its childhood, its being despised and rejected and evil-intreated of men, though never forgotten of God, and finally put to death by the Romans; after which it was raised again a new spiritual body,† the church, according to the plain teaching of the Apostle James in the Council at Jerusalem, as recorded in the 15th chapter of Acts (verses 14–16). This view of the place of Israel in the succes-

* See "Ages before Moses," Lect. IX.

† See Appendix: Israel and Christ.

sion of the promise throws light upon many passages of Scripture which have been stumbling-blocks to interpreters who have failed to see it. Take, for instance, that passage in Hosea, applied by the Evangelist Matthew to Christ: "out of Egypt have I called My son." How often has this been cited as a misapplication of a prophecy, which manifestly refers to the nation of Israel; and sometimes commentators have tried to defend it on the ground of its being a mere accommodation; whereas it is most natural, most appropriate, and most striking, when we only keep in mind the link of connection between the son of the earlier and the son of the later era, and the closely typical relation of the former to the latter. Or take those passages where the servant of Jehovah is spoken of in Isaiah; and how erroneous it at once is seen to be, to conclude that because some of these passages seem to refer to the nation of Israel, therefore, they do not refer to the Holy One of Israel, of whom the holy nation was an imperfect type. Here, again, we might occupy a whole lecture in exploring this inviting field, but we must refrain. Enough has probably been said to justify the claim for a deep evangelical interest in this history.

Lastly, *the Personal Interest* we may dismiss in a single word, by saying that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable (and few parts more so than the books before us) for doctrine, and reproof, and correction, and instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The National era, like the Patriarchal, begins with an Exodus. In fact, every dispensation of grace does, and must. Adam's Exodus looks a very sad one; but after he had sinned, it was the only way of safety for him. It was really in mercy to him that the Lord brought him out and away from the scene of his disobedience. Noah's was a strange, but most significant Exodus, from the heathenism of the old world across the boat-bridge which spanned the dark waters of judgment. Abraham's spiritual career begins with an Exodus from old heathen Padan-Aram; and all his spiritual descendants must begin their career in like manner by an Exodus from their old unconverted state. It is quite in keeping then with God's dealings with His children in all ages, that the first step in the history of the chosen nation should be an Exodus.

The Exodus, as we all know, is from Egypt. But before we speak of the getting out, we must have a word as to how they got in, and why they stayed in so long. "Israel *in* Egypt" is the theme of the first chapter.

By a reference to the history of Abraham (Gen. xv. 13), we find that the four hundred years' affliction in Egypt had been distinctly foretold; but this only throws us back upon the previous question: Why was it foretold? Why did it enter into the Divine plan at all? We can find in the Patriarchal history the answer to this question also. In Genesis xlvi. 3, we read that God spake unto Israel in visions of the night, and said: "I am God, the God of thy father: fear not to go down into Egypt; for I will there make of thee a great nation." The explanation of Israel in Egypt is found in the pur-

pose of God to make of Israel a great nation. This thought may be briefly expanded thus: time was needed to grow in numbers; contact with the world's best civilisation was needed to learn important lessons of national wisdom and life; experience of severe trial was necessary in order to weld the people firmly together, and to teach them that, while much was to be learnt from contact with the world, their only safety lay in reliance upon God. May we not also suppose that Israel was kept in Egypt so long, for the purpose of showing, in a very striking manner, how thoroughly unsatisfactory is the world's greatness and glory apart from the Divine presence and blessing. As this thought is, perhaps, less familiar than the others, let us dwell upon it for a little.

Remember that Egypt was the grandest representative of the world's most ancient civilisation. In some respects indeed she has had no peer in all the world's history. And the period of the story of Israel in Egypt was just the period of Egypt's greatest glory. It covers all the time of the Eighteenth dynasty, with its succession of illustrious Thothmes and Amenophs, and includes all the glories of the Nineteenth dynasty, the greatness of which passed away with the son of Rameses, who was overthrown in the Red Sea. Of Thothmes III., whom he calls "the Alexander the Great of Egyptian history," Brugsch-Bey says, that he left "a whole world of monuments behind him," "that the riches in works of all kinds can scarcely be counted, from the largest temples to the tiny scarabæi, which all bear the name of the greatest king of those times." This was a sample of the Eighteenth dynasty; and yet it was not till the

Nineteenth and the days of the great Pharaoh of Israel's oppression, that Egypt attained the full zenith of her power and magnificence, which coincided also with a culminating period in letters and in art.

What a memorable four hundred years! Yet it is passed over in silence in the sacred records. Why? Because it had so little of God in it. Mere worldly glory finds no place in the Divine records. It may be "graven with an iron pen, and with lead in the rock for ever"; but it has no place in the book of remembrance which is kept for the eye of God, and of the holy ones who inhabit eternity. A brief notice at the beginning; a briefer notice at the end; that is all we have in the Divine record concerning the four hundred years which Israel spent amid the surpassing glories of the ancient empire of Egypt. And what do these notices tell us of the effect on Israel of their long and close contact with the world's greatest magnificence? Simply this: they entered Egypt as *princes;* before they left it they were *slaves.* The great country of the South was meant for a school; it has proved a prison. "The land of Egypt" has become "the house of bondage." And that notwithstanding the fact that they prospered greatly at the first: "the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly, and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with them." Notwithstanding the fact, did we say? Quite probably for this very reason. In their prosperity they forgot God, and as a consequence fell an easy prey to the tyranny of the oppressor. It is no uncommon experience for a man, as well as a nation, to be a prince before he prospers and a slave after it.

Communion with God in the solitude of old Canaan made Israel a prince (Gen. xxxii. 28), conformity to the world amid the splendours of Egypt made Israel a slave. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

We have spoken of the truly apostolical succession of Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Israel, Christ. Side by side was another succession of a kind not at all apostolical: Sodom, Egypt, Babylon, Rome. Sodom was a type of the world's evil in the early patriarchal times. In the early national times, Egypt, and in the later times, Babylon, was the great representative of the World as distinguished from the people of God. In the Saviour's time it was the vast Empire of Rome. This succession is hinted at in certain parts of the Apocalypse, as for instance in Rev. ii. 8, where Jerusalem is "spiritually called Sodom and Egypt." Sodom is associated in our minds with wickedness only, though no doubt it was a great place in its day; but Egypt stands out before us as a fuller and more adequate type of the world, with her glory as well as her shame. And from Israel's relation to Egypt we may learn two great lessons, one of counsel, the other of warning: one of counsel how to use the world, the other of warning against abusing it. From God's purpose in regard to Israel let us learn that just as Egypt was necessary as a school for His chosen people, so the world ought to be a school for us. We are not to despise its greatness. No word of contempt for Egypt's greatness is found in the sacred records. The nation was intended to learn, and did acquire, many useful arts which were of much service to them afterwards in the Land of Promise. Moses, the chosen of God, was learned in all the wisdom

of the Egyptians, and was thereby qualified for the great work for which he was called. In these examples we may see how to use this world, making it a school to prepare us for our inheritance and the work the Lord may have for us there to do. On the other hand, let us beware of so yielding to the seductions of this evil world as to lose our hold of God, and His covenant, and so incur the certainty of forfeiting our eternal birthright and becoming the world's slaves, helping perhaps to rear its mighty monuments, with the prospect possibly of having our names engraved in stone among the ruins of some buried city, but without the prospect of having them written "among the living in Jerusalem," the eternal City of God. Earth's great ones belong to the dead past; but Heaven's great ones have their portion in a glorious future.

Sodom, Thebes, Babylon, Rome, LONDON! Yes, the time is coming when even London's wealth and grandeur shall be a thing of the past, as certainly and as impressively as that of Thebes is to-day; the time is coming when our railroads and telegraphs shall be as "overworn" as are

> "Those temples, palaces, and piles stupendous,
> Of which the very ruins are tremendous."

And even our Stephensons and Brunels will take their places with the architects of the Pyramids and the engineers of Lake Mœris. Do we rejoice in the scientific greatness of modern times? But was there not science at least as deep, embodied in that vast miracle of stone which perplexes the wits of Astronomers Royal, and

leads even distinguished mathematicians to see in it a miracle indeed, a veritable revelation of scientific truth from Heaven? Yet even the great Pyramid was not too great to die. It is not railroads and telegraphs and modern improvements that are of true and lasting consequence. It is the soul and its training for the life to come in the Land of Promise. Unquestionably mighty London is in the line of succession from old Babylon and older Thebes and Memphis. But, blessed be God, it is in another line of succession. England's greatness, unlike that of old Egypt, is founded on the Bible and on Christ. Therein lies the hope of the nation for the future. And therein lies the hope of each of us. Let us use our world of England and of London, as not abusing it; never forgetting that the fashion of it passeth away, and making sure that we have our portion in the great Eternity, with Him who shall guide us by His counsel, and at last receive us to His glory.

II.

THE WAY OUT.

EXODUS II.–IV.

NOW that Egypt, intended for a school of training, has become a house of bondage, a way out of it must be found, unless God's promise is to fail. But where shall it be found? To human view it was impossible. Even the great independent nations of the North were no match for the mighty Rameses and what chance would the poor slaves in the brick-kilns have against his power? And the monarch of Egypt was as strong at home as he was abroad. The nation was intoxicated with the glory of his victories; and to oppose his will was to brave the entire force of two empires united under one resistless head. There seemed no way out.

But God found a way out. He always can, however strongly barred the prison doors may be—ay, though the prison be a sepulchre with a great stone rolled to the door of it, sealed with a Roman seal, and watched by a Roman guard.

God could have found many ways out of Egypt. He was not by any means limited in His resources. He might have led His people out by a much shorter and easier way than that which He chose; and the story of

the Exodus might have been as short and simple as the story of the Resurrection. And if the only object in view had been the deliverance of the people from Egypt, a single stroke—short, sharp, and effectual, like that with which He smote the Assyrians, who in later times came down like a wolf on His fold—would have finished the work and set His people free. But, in the first place, God is never prodigal of wonders; it is only when natural means are insufficient that the supernatural is introduced. And then, besides, He had important lessons to teach His people which required time for presentation and impression; and He had important lessons for us. Above all He chose a way out of Egypt which should be a most instructive and impressive picture to all generations of the only way out of the bondage of sin. The Old Testament is full of pictures of salvation; but this is the largest and grandest of them all. It is the first that meets us as we enter the great national gallery, after leaving the life-like pictures of the grand old patriarchs. And it stands alone like the Madonna at Dresden, as *the* picture of the gallery, the Old Testament picture of salvation.

Sometimes a picture is more impressive than the reality. Have you not often stood in admiration and enjoyment before a picture of some scene which would not have attracted your attention at all if you had seen the reality instead of the mere representation of it? And in the same way it often comes to pass that the pictures of salvation in the Old Testament are more impressive than the salvation itself as presented in the New. "When Israel was a child," the great salvation

was presented in pictorial form; and pictorial teaching is good, not for children only, but for grown-up people too. These things were "written for our learning" also; and just as by looking at a good picture many beauties are brought out which we could not have discovered for ourselves without the revelation which came from the artist's mind and the light reflected from his eye, so by looking at the Exodus picture of the great salvation we may learn some things which even a careful study of Matthew or of John would fail to disclose, or, at all events, so deeply to impress.

By "the way out" we do not mean the whole story of the Exodus, which will occupy us for some time to come; but only those preparations which were made before the first summons was addressed to mighty Pharaoh: "Let My people go." In the ordinary course of God's working nothing is done suddenly; and that which appears to be sudden, is the result of a long course of preparation that has been quietly going on. Now, as we look at these chapters before us (Exod. ii., iii., iv.) we can see a twofold preparation in the providence of God for the great deliverance which was in course of time to be wrought: (1) a Deliverer prepared for the people, and, (2) the people prepared for deliverance. Let us look at each of these in their order, without attempting, however, to enter into details, which it would be vain to do, as these chapters are so rich and full that almost every clause might make a sermon.

I. A Deliverer prepared for the people according to the Divine method: "A man shall be as an hiding-place

from the wind, and a covert from the tempest." The man whom God now chooses is Moses, one of the grandest men, as all acknowledge, that ever walked upon this earth. We have his birth and education in chapter ii., his call and commission in chapter iii., and in chapter iv. credentials and qualifications.

In the story of his infancy,—how simple, how natural, how life-like, how manifestly transparent and truthful, with a striking absence of all those miraculous accompaniments with which fable is wont to encircle the infancy of its heroes—in that story we have a striking illustration of how God "makes the wrath of man to praise Him." He uses Pharaoh's edict of extermination against the Hebrew children as His letter of introduction to the court of Pharaoh and the universities of Egypt for that Hebrew child who is to be Israel's champion, who shall open for His people a way out of their galling bondage. It reminds us of that cruel cross, which represented the wrath of men who with wicked hands attempted to destroy the Saviour of the world, but which ever since has been "the power of God and the wisdom of God" unto salvation.

The education of Moses covers eighty years: forty in Egypt, forty in the land of Midian. From this it follows that his birth must have taken place about the beginning of the reign of Rameses the Great; and it becomes exceedingly interesting to contrast the magnificent career of the world's hero with the quiet preparation of God's hero, and reflect how God makes use of "the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty." The great Egyptian monarch

is now nothing more than "the shadow of a mighty name"; the poor Hebrew child has a mightier influence in the great world of this nineteenth century than he had even on that awful night when he wrested from the relaxing grasp of Rameses' son the victims of his father's tyranny.

Forty years in Egypt, during which he was trained "in all the wisdom of the Egyptians,"—showing the value of a thorough education in letters and art, science and philosophy, and all that the wisdom of the world can give us, provided only we keep all in subordination to the great aim of serving our generation according to the will of God. This Moses evidently did. "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ* greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." It is impossible to do justice even in imagination to the heroism of this faith. The court of Pharaoh was as great in those days as the court of England is now, and relatively to the rest of the world, much greater; the Hebrews were of no more consideration than so many gypsies would be among us. Imagine then, if you can, what it must have been for one brought up amid all the splendours of the court, deliberately to prefer the reproach of that despised people whom even the common Egyptians spoke of as "lepers"!

It is most worthy of notice that there is not a hint

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* See Appendix: Israel and Christ.

of faith or of heroism in the narrative before us. We are told, indeed, that he did identify himself with the oppressed people; but it is told in such a way as to bring out the weakness of Moses rather than his strength (see chap. ii. 11–14). What does this mean? It means most undoubtedly that Moses himself is the author of the story as we have it in Exodus. If it had been written by another hand, and in a later age, as many now-a-days are trying to make out, it would have been at least appreciative and almost certainly highly laudatory, as in the pages of Josephus, for example; whereas, in the plain unvarnished narrative before us, there is a conspicuous absence of everything of the kind, while every weakness is honestly, faithfully recorded. Evidently Moses was a most modest man, as all truly great men are. And herein, no doubt, is found the solution of those difficulties which some discover in comparing the accounts in Exodus with certain references in the New Testament, which they are pleased to call contradictions, whereas they are only those variations which we always expect to find between what a great man, with modesty proportioned to his greatness, will say of himself, and what another will say of him. Take even that which seems most serious of all, where in Exodus we are told he "feared," and in Hebrews he is spoken of as "not fearing the wrath of the king." Can you doubt that, in the former case, Moses is speaking of a moment of weakness when his heart did fail him, whereas in Hebrews, it is the general character of the man, in which undaunted courage was a large and almost constant element, which is referred to? The

grandeur of the sacrifice which Moses made appears all the greater that he himself says nothing about it. Many a small man has never done talking about the small sacrifices he makes; but he is a great man indeed, who can sacrifice everything and say nothing.

The forty years in Egypt were followed by another forty years in the solitude of the desert. Egypt was a good place for a course in arts; but it was no place for theology. The rocks of the desert make a far better Divinity hall than the temples of Heliopolis. To become truly acquainted with God, a man must be much alone. We are sometimes apt to be impatient of the time which is spent in the inactivity of solitary communings; but think of these forty years, and learn the value that God puts on solitary communion and meditation as a preparation for great and glorious service. We must be much alone with God, if we would have genuine power and command lasting success in the work He has for us to do. It was evidently a time of trial as well as of solitary communing. It must have been. Think of that mighty spirit, already all on fire, as is evident from his encounter with the Egyptian, tamed down by *forty years* of waiting! The sorrow of his spirit appears in the name he gives his son, born to him in the desert: "he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land." As Egypt was the scene of the trial of his *faith*, it was in Midian that *patience* had her perfect work.

And now that he is fully trained, he is ready to be called and commissioned. A voice from out of a bush in the desert, burning, but unconsumed, is the means

employed. We need not dwell on so familiar a symbol, setting forth as it does the affliction of the people of God as a purifying but not destroying process, and at the same time manifesting the presence of the glory of God under the old familiar appearance, which had first greeted the eye of fallen man at the gates of the garden. Without going into details, let me only ask you to notice the two main thoughts in the revelation here made to Moses.

The first is the sinfulness of man in relation to the Divine holiness: "draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground. . . . . And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God" (chap. iii. 5, 6). The great truth taught is this, and it sounds on more and more solemnly all through the Mosaic era: * "without Holiness no man can see the Lord."

The other is the love of God in its relation to human sorrow, oh, how beautifully and tenderly expressed: "I have surely seen (it looks as if I had not, but I have *surely* seen) the affliction of My people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows; and I am come down to deliver them" (ver. 7, 8). What Moses *sees* is the appearance of devouring fire; but what he *hears* is the blessed Gospel. We need the comfort of the word addressed to the ear of faith, to explain the mysteries of Nature and Providence which lie open before the eye of

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* This is the first time the word "holy" occurs in the Bible. It is not found in Genesis.

observation. "Behind a frowning Providence" God often "hides a smiling face"; but we should never have known it, had it not been for the revelation or unveiling of Himself which He has given us in His Word. The fire we often dread so much is but a manifestation of the Divine holiness, while to him that hath ears to hear, there will come from out the heart of it "a still small voice," telling most tenderly of a heavenly Father's love.

Surely now Moses, after so long waiting and such thorough training, will be eager to enter at once upon his great life work. But no. The eagerness of immaturity has gone. While all unprepared he was ready to dash in. But now that his preparation is complete, he shrinks back from a task which seems too great for his feeble powers. How true to nature, and how full of instruction. We need not stop to draw out the obvious lesson, nor can we follow in detail the interesting account of the successive difficulties which Moses raised, and the way in which God met them all, dealing most gently and kindly with His servant when his hesitation was due to a proper modesty and distrust of his own powers, and with a faithful but tempered severity when his reluctance was the result of unbelief and distrust of the Divine power and promise. When Moses says (ver. 11): "who am I that I should go unto Pharaoh?" God answers, "certainly I will be with thee," and in mercy gives him a token that it was no conditional commission with which he was entrusted, like that of Jonah afterwards to Nineveh, but one which was absolutely fixed and certain, "When thou hast brought forth the people out of

Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain" (ver. 12). When he asks (ver. 13) "what shall I say?" God gives him a name* to proclaim and a message to deliver more rich and full of promise and of hope than ever before had greeted human ears. When he interposes the difficulty (iv. 1) that the people will not hearken to his voice, God gives him a series of signs to be his credentials. When again (ver. 10) he pleads that he is slow of speech, how striking the answer, with a gentle tone of reproof in it, and yet so tenderly considerate of His servant's infirmity: "And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say." But when the gentle reproof has failed of its purpose, and the servant still shrinks back from the appointed task (ver. 13), then the Lord is angry, and while the difficulty is met, it is met in such a way as to limit by just so much the honor which had been in all its fulness intended for Moses alone, and to prepare also no little sorrow in the future, because now the tongue the great leader has to use is one far less consecrated than his own. After this there still remained one difficulty, not like these others in the mind of Moses, but in his family, where that important rite which symbolized the covenant of the old patriarchal times had been neglected. This explains the episode in verses 24–26. And now that the lions are all out of the way, Moses is ready to go.

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* See Appendix: on the name Jehovah.

But before we leave the subject of the preparation of the Deliverer, let us look at those miraculous credentials by which he was accredited to the people, as set forth in the beginning of chapter iv. It is quite evident in the first place that signs were needed on this occasion. The experience of Moses before, when he stood forth as the champion of his oppressed brethren, made it evident that something more than a mere verbal claim was necessary to secure the confidence and allegiance of the people. And the more we look at the signs which were appointed for the purpose, the more appropriate we see them to be. It is freely confessed that to a superficial observer they have an inferior look, quite unlike the beautiful and truth-like miracles recorded of Our Lord in the Gospels. But when we take a deeper view, and consider their relation to the symbolic language of Egypt and to the forms and modes of thought with which the children of Israel were most familiar, we can see how exceedingly natural and significant they were.

Remember what were the three chief sources of discouragement in prospect of the great enterprize. They were first, the weakness of Moses himself as matched against the mighty Pharaoh; next, the weakness of the people in their degraded and despised estate; and thirdly, the greatness of the mighty empire of Egypt. A sign was given to quiet the apprehensions of Moses and the people in relation to each of these three sources of discouragement.

First, Moses felt himself, and was reckoned by the people, so weak, that it seemed presumption to quit his shepherd life and go before Pharaoh. It was like laying

down a shepherd's staff and taking up a serpent.* And so, as a sign, Moses is told to cast down his staff, and it becomes a serpent. The sign allows that it is a dangerous work he must now take up. But when he takes it up, lo, it becomes again a rod in his hand! It will come as easy to him, after all, as his quiet shepherd life. It will be no fanged serpent that he has in his grasp, but "the rod of God," † harmless to himself, mighty against the foe.

Next there was the low estate of the people, a community of lepers, as it were, for so they were called in derision by the Egyptians; and treated like lepers, they felt like lepers too, a usual consequence of long continued degradation. To meet this sad discouragement a second sign was given. Moses's hand becomes leprous as snow. Thus, as before, the difficulty is acknowledged. But, as before, it is triumphantly met: "Put thy hand into thy bosom again"; and when he plucked it out, it was turned again as his other flesh. God is able to make the leper clean, to change a horde of slaves into a host of heroes.

These signs were supposed to be sufficient; but if they still should hesitate at the thought of the terrible might of Egypt, a third sign is given: water from the Nile is changed into blood—which meant in symbol (for the Nile was the life, and strength, and glory, and source of all the greatness of Egypt, and accordingly was worshipped as the great god of Egypt) that Jehovah can in

* The serpent was an emblem of royalty in Egypt.

† See Exod. xvii. 9.

a moment, if He will, turn the life of Egypt into death, its glory into shame. Could you think of any series of signs more appropriate to the occasion, or more fitted to accomplish the gracious purpose for which they were given?

And here we cannot but remember how the Lord Jesus comes to us, first with His cross, which, with all its natural repulsiveness, becomes the rod of God in His hand, the very "power of God unto salvation"; then with His grace, which can take the leprous heart and make it pure again. This is all we need: His cross for pardon, His Spirit of grace for cleansing. But if we refuse to hearken to the first sign and to the second, there is a third in reserve. For those who turn from His cross, and refuse to receive His Spirit, there remaineth only "a certain fearful looking for of judgment."

II. And now having followed the course by which the great Deliverer was prepared by birth and training, by call and commission, by credential and qualification, let us look at the other side, and inquire how the people were prepared for deliverance. This is a very simple matter and need not detain us long. In these chapters there is a great deal about the Deliverer, and very little about the people. Two lines cover it all; one in the 23d verse of the second chapter: "the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried"; and one in the 31st verse of the fourth chapter: "the people believed: and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that He had looked upon their affliction, then they bowed their heads and wor-

shipped." In the first of these two passages we see the people brought to a sense of their bondage and their need, and constrained to cry for mercy. In the second we find them exercising faith, showing humility, and surrendering themselves to the Divine guidance. That is all that is needed. The people are ripe for deliverance now.

And it is all that is needed for the great salvation of which the Exodus was a type. Let us not imagine we need to go through a long course of preparation so as to be ready for salvation. No forty years' training either in Egypt or in Midian is needed for this. We have simply first to realize our need, and cry for mercy:

> "All the fitness he requireth
> Is to feel our need of Him:"

and then to receive the mercy freely offered, which we do by believing, bowing our heads in submission, and worshipping Him with the homage of the heart and devotion of the life. That is the whole of salvation so far as the people are concerned.

All things are now ready. There was indeed a long course of preparation for the coming of the Saviour. The foundations were slowly laid in the course of the ages until in the fulness of the time God sent His Son, the great Deliverer from the bondage of sin. Like Moses, He came after long centuries of waiting for the promise which was given of old to Abraham; like Moses, He proves, though a king's son, to be one of ourselves, "flesh of our flesh," "not ashamed to call us brethren"; like Moses, He was indebted to Egypt for safety from

perils of His infancy; like Moses, He was rejected by His own when He espoused their cause,* and like Moses, He comes to us with the rod of His power and the sceptre of His grace, to call us out of the Egypt of sin and sorrow into "a land flowing with milk and honey." "I am the Way," He says; the way out of the bondage of sin, the way into the liberty of the children of God.

* See Acts vii. 35–51.

III.

PHARAOH SUBDUED.

EXODUS V.–XI. (XIV.)

THE way out has been prepared; the going out remains, the Exodus proper. The account of it is long, extending from the fifth chapter to the end of the fourteenth, for we can scarcely say that the Exodus was complete till the children of Israel had passed through the Red Sea. And here it is interesting to compare the Genesis with the Exodus. The great work of creation is disposed of in a single chapter—how easily. The work covered long ages, but there was no obstacle in the way, and accordingly, "He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast." But the work of the Exodus is not so easily accomplished. It is the work, not of ages, but only of a few months; but it can not be disposed of in a few sentences. In this work God has to do, not with matter, which He can mould as He will, and fashion by His word into forms of beauty and wonder, nor with life in its lower forms, which omnipotence can so easily control; but with the human will, whose princely freedom and responsibility is His own gift, not to be lightly recalled. He could by a single word have crushed out all opposition even of the mighty monarch of Egypt; but He forbears to exercise this

power of external constraint, and chooses rather to deal with His intelligent creatures in accordance with the nature He has given them. Hence the long controversy with Pharaoh which lies before us.

Besides this, we must bear in mind the varied purposes which God had in view; for as we had occasion to remark before, He had other objects to accomplish besides the mere setting of Israel free. Some of these are referred to in the course of the narrative. First, there is the revelation of Himself as Jehovah (read especially that very instructive passage, Exod. vi. 1–8). The name, indeed, had been known as a mere name from the beginning, but the import of the name had not been revealed; there had been no manifestation of its tender and blessed significance.* God had made Himself known to the patriarchs as Father and Friend, Protector and Guide, but not till now did He reveal Himself as Redeemer and Saviour. The covenant had been made with Abraham, but it had remained simply a covenant of promise. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off." But now God shows Himself as the covenant-keeping God, faithfully fulfilling the promise He has made, manifesting for the first time the wonders of redeeming love.

The humiliation of Egypt was another object in view, as may be seen by referring to chapter ix. 16, 17, and chapter xii. 12. How signally this was accomplished, especially the executing of judgment against the gods of Egypt, and proclaiming the name of the redeeming

* See Appendix: on the name Jehovah.

God of Israel as high above them all, will be seen when we come to the series of plagues. A third purpose, viz., the education of Israel, is referred to in chapter x. 2, where the Lord says to Moses: "I show these My signs . . . . that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt." Finally, there is the instruction of the ages to come, as the Apostle Paul shows so strikingly in his Epistle to the Corinthians (1 Cor. x. 1–11). Thus we see that there were reasons of many kinds, why God did not overpower Pharaoh in a moment, as He could so easily have done, but chose rather to bring about the liberation of His people by the much slower, but more instructive and impressive method recorded in the chapters before us.

There are two main things to be studied in the story of the Exodus: I. How God subdued Pharaoh. II. How God saved Israel. The former is set forth in chapters v.–xi., the latter in chapters xii., xiii., while the culmination of both is presented in all its grandeur in chapter xiv. The former is the subject of the present lecture.

But before we look at the details of the long conflict with Pharaoh, let us glance at the spiritual significance of it all. Pharaoh is God's enemy, Israel God's people. We all of us have our Israel side, for are we not in the image of God? And we all of us have our Pharaoh side, for are we not all sinners? And by nature, alas, the Pharaoh side has the upper hand, and keeps the Israel side in bondage, until our Redeemer God, by the power of His sovereign grace, subdues our sins and sets

our spirits free. Let us remember then, as we learn how God subdued Pharaoh, that we are looking at a picture of God subduing sin in human hearts, that He may liberate the higher nature which it had enslaved. We have in it all a type of the great work of emancipation undertaken by Him who came "to preach deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

The conflict begins with the simple demand, "Let My people go, that they may hold a feast unto Me, in the wilderness" (chap. v. 1). The demand was most moderate and most reasonable. No occasion was given to Pharaoh to harden his heart. We cannot suppose indeed that even if he had granted this reasonable request, nothing more would have been asked. But there can be no doubt that if he had showed a disposition to yield to the claims of the God of Israel, the ultimate liberation of the people would have been brought about in a way that would have entailed no suffering or distress on him (see chap. vii. 4). Had he yielded, he would no doubt have brought blessing to himself and to Egypt, rather than otherwise. But he did not. He scornfully replied, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." The result was that matters became worse instead of better (chap. v. 4–19), the people murmured against Moses (ver. 20, 21), and Moses himself was sadly discouraged (ver. 22, 23).

And here we have a beautiful illustration of how "God knoweth our frame, and remembereth that we are dust." Instead of showing any displeasure with the

people, and especially with Moses, who might have remembered the strong words of assurance he had so lately heard at the burning bush, the Lord draws tenderly near, and without a single word of reproach, renews His gracious promise in still stronger and fuller terms (vi. 1–8), and sends it as a message of cheer to His afflicted people. Yet still the people were uncomforted; "they hearkened not unto Moses for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage" (ver. 9). And still Moses was far from being reassured (ver. 12, 30). We see at once how true to nature all this is. It is not so easy to find consolation even in the richest promises, when the waves and billows are rolling over us. There are those who have had grace to show themselves strong in faith even when the furnace has been seven times heated; and it is a noble witness for God, when His people can honor him in this way. Let us by all means aim at it when our day of trial shall come. But if we fall short, as many have done and still will do, let it be a comfort to think how God bore with His people's faintheartedness, and did not allow their want of confidence in Him to be a barrier to His abounding grace. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good: for His mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy" (Ps. cvii. 1, 2).

The demand was made a second time with an accompanying sign, a simple sign given for the purpose of convincing Pharaoh that it was indeed God who summoned him to yield. He had said, "I know not the Lord," but now that excuse was taken from him by the miraculous token which Moses was commanded to display in his

presence. And though the magicians came to his rescue, he must have known that it was a mere evasion, for Pharaoh could not well have been ignorant of their devices; and, besides, they were utterly discomfited in the presence of the two Hebrew commissioners, for "Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods" (vii. 12). But still the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he refused to let the people go.

The demand is made a third time; and as the simple sign has failed, the plague signs begin. Let us pause a moment here to note how God deals with those who oppose His will. He comes first with a word, a simple word of counsel and warning; and blessed are those who listen to Him as soon as He intimates His will in this quiet and pleasant way. But if His word is unheeded, He will approach with a sign; some combination of circumstances, perhaps, which makes the demand impressive, and plainly suggests the thought—"it is the Lord that is speaking; it is His Spirit that is striving with me." But if the sign is also unheeded, what remains? How else can He call attention to His neglected word than by sending forth His plagues? When words fail, and signs fail, He must come to blows. "He does not afflict willingly," but we often by our want of heed compel Him to afflict. Let us see to it that none of us provoke the Lord to anger as Pharaoh did.

It is needless to attempt to deny the miraculous nature of the plagues of Egypt. It is true that most of them have a natural basis in the familiar phenomena of Egypt; but then it must not be forgotten that they came at the word of Moses, and went at the word of

Moses, one after another, and at the word of Moses would spare the land of Goshen, where Israel lived. And these and other wonders in the book are so interwoven with the rest of the narrative, that it is impossible to discredit the one without destroying the other. And why should there be such hesitation to admit the supernatural on an occasion when it was so plainly needed? When we consider the long reaches of time covered in the Bible history, it is only at long intervals that miracles are introduced; and when we look closely, we find that the occasions when they are introduced are just the very occasions when we should naturally expect such manifestations. Enough has been said about the importance of the Exodus and of the Mosaic era as a whole, to justify the expectation that God would give some signal tokens of His presence and His power at that epoch; and when we find our expectations justified in the narrative, it should be a help and not a hindrance to our faith. And not only is it natural that miracles should be wrought at this particular time, but the miracles which are recorded are found, when closely examined, to be just those that were needed to accomplish the varied purposes which Jehovah had in view. We have had occasion to note this in regard to the three signs which were given to Moses as his credentials to the people, and one of which was used in the presence of Pharaoh before recourse was had to the plague-signs, which are now under consideration. It is no less conspicuous in the plague-signs themselves. And here we can see how much better it was that the plagues should come in the shape of natural phenomena of

the land of Egypt, rather than in some quite unfamiliar form.

In the first place this would serve to show that it was no momentary external power which the God of the Hebrews had obtained over Egypt, just as a foreign king might, by the use of foreign resources, gain a temporary advantage; but that He had control of the forces which were in the land itself, and therefore had an abiding power which no length of resistance could weaken or defy. Thus He showed Himself to be "Lord in the midst of the land," as it is put in chapter viii. 22. How strikingly and completely this was done will appear when we consider that the pride and glory of Egypt, as well as its common pests, were used as instruments of the plagues. The majestic Nile, source of Egypt's greatness; the transparent atmosphere, so serene and lovely under the splendours of an Egyptian sun—on these God laid His mighty hand, turning the water into blood, and spreading a pall of darkness over all the sky. And then the frogs, the flies, the locusts, with which the people were all so painfully and frequently familiar—lo, they came, they went; they multiplied, diminished, disappeared, at the bidding of Jehovah, God of Israel. Thus impressively did He demonstrate that He was "Lord in the midst of the land."

We have still another point of view in Exodus xii. 12, already referred to: "Against all the gods of Egypt will I execute judgment." The worship of the Nile-god, and of the Sun-god, their scarabæi and their sacred bulls, and some of their most valued rites and superstitions, were brought into contempt by the several plagues which the

Lord made use of to humble Egypt, and execute judgment against its gods. The effect on the mind of the on-looker is strikingly exhibited in the words of the Midianite Jethro (xviii. 11): "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods: *for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly He was above them.*" Is it not evident, then, that it was much more instructive and impressive for God to lay His hand on those natural phenomena which had been ascribed by the Egyptians to the agency of their own gods, than if He had visited them with some unheard-of catastrophe?

Once more, we have in this feature of the plagues an indication of the genuineness of the history. If the author of Exodus had set himself to invent miracles, they would, in all probability, have been unearthly, unnatural, and fantastic; but when we find them so intimately related to the known phenomena of Egypt, and so admirably chosen for the purpose of accomplishing those designs which are contemplated in the whole transaction, have we not a strong corroboration of their genuineness and truth?

It is interesting also to look at the plagues as a progressive series. Look first at the ascending series in nature, beginning with the water turned into blood, and the frogs coming out of it on the earth; then the gnats and flies in the lower atmosphere, and afterwards the locusts in the upper air; after which the sun is reached, and darkness is over all the land; while the series ends with an arrest upon life itself, the life of the firstborn of man, creation's crown. Or, looking at the series as representing the overthrow of the Egyptian deities, we rise

from the Nile-god below to the Sun-god above, with all kinds of intermediate deities between. Or again, we may view the series as one of increasing severity throughout the successive gradations of discomfort, loss, personal suffering, death. Or finally, we may look at it as advancing from the less to the greater, beginning with that lower field in which the magicians were able to perform similar wonders with their enchantments; then rising to a plane where they could not even profess to follow (viii. 19), and ending by those marvellous "divisions" between Egypt and Israel (ver. 23), which culminated on that eventful night when the destroying angel passed by the houses of the people of the Lord; so that each successive plague rendered more conspicuous the resistless might and exhaustless resources against His enemies and for His people, of Jehovah God of Israel.

So much for the thrice repeated demand, first with a simple word, then with a simple sign, and lastly with a series of plague-signs increasing in severity, till the haughty monarch of Egypt was forced to yield. But we must not miss the instruction which is conveyed in the way in which Pharaoh bore himself under these successive visitations. We have seen that he paid no attention to the word, and none to the sign. He had of course to pay attention to the plagues. Let us see in what fashion he did so.

The first plague seems only to have made him sullen, and more obstinate than ever (vii. 23). The next brings him to his knees with a prayer and a promise (viii. 8); but, when at his request the plague is removed, he takes back his word, and is as rebellious as before (ver. 15), and

carries the same spirit throughout the third plague. The fourth plague apparently brings him to his senses, for he sends for Moses and Aaron, and says (ver. 25): "Go ye, sacrifice to your God." But it proves only to be a promise, for he has no intention yet to let them go the three days' journey into the wilderness to sacrifice there. He allows them to sacrifice, but it must be "*in the land.*" The compromise is not accepted (ver. 26, 27). He then proposes another: "I will let you go, that ye may sacrifice to the Lord your God in the wilderness; only ye shall not go very far away." A third compromise is attempted later on (x. 8): "Go, serve the Lord your God: but who are they that shall go?" "Your little ones shall not go" (ver. 10, 11). And when this is utterly rejected, a fourth is proposed (ver. 24): "Go ye, serve the Lord; let your little ones also go with you; only let your flocks and your herds be stayed." But even this last will not avail. The stern answer of Moses is: "Our cattle also shall go with us; there shall not an hoof be left behind." Still further on he seems to make an unconditional surrender (xii. 31, 32); but it is only a forced surrender; it is not genuine. His heart is not in it, as is proved by his subsequent conduct (xiv. 8) in pursuing the children of Israel after they had gone. The result is that, after such long forbearance, and so many reprieves, the long suspended judgment must fall; and Pharaoh and his host are drowned in the Red Sea.

Time would fail to gather the weighty lessons in all this; and indeed they stand out with such startling distinctness that it is scarcely necessary to call attention to them. Have not many of us resisted God very much

as Pharaoh did, at some part or other of the long controversy? And have there not been at all times too many who have followed Pharaoh all the way through, and shared his terrible fate in the end? We have already spoken of the danger of that trifling with God, which appeared in the earlier stages; let us now interpose a word of warning against those attempts at compromise which were characteristic of the middle stages. Are not these compromises of Pharaoh just the kind of compromises the sinner is most apt to make when he is summoned to come out and be separate? He is ready to say, "Why should I come? May I not sacrifice to God *in the land?* Religion is a good thing, a most excellent thing; but may I not have it and the world too?" No, it will not do. We must come out and be separate. It will not merely do to graft a religious life on the old life. It will not do to leave the old as it was, and only add on some Bible reading and praying and church attendance. There must be a radical and thorough change. "Verily I say unto you: ye must be born again." No compromise: no sacrificing to God *in the land.*

Then the next temptation will be to make a second compromise, somewhat in this manner: "I will come out, but I will not go very far away; I will hang on the borders of my old worldliness and sin." This is what many do; but it is at a fearful risk, for they are in constant danger of relapse. The fate of the stony-ground hearers is all too common.

Further on in a man's history comes the danger of the third compromise: "the grown-up ones may go;

but the little ones must stay." It is a sad thing to think how many there are in these days, who though themselves brought up under the best of religious influence, with regular family worship at home, and everything fitted to lead them in the right way, and though still retaining their old associations and church connections, are not nearly so careful to train *their* children for the Lord. They have family worship irregularly or not at all. They do not teach their children, as their fathers and mothers taught them; or pray with them as they were prayed with. Let no such compromise be known amongst us. Let us be as thoroughly in earnest as Israel was, to have our children with us in sacrificing to the Lord our God.

The fourth compromise is a very common one indeed: "Take your little ones with you; but leave your property behind." There are some people who are willing that conversion should reach everything else, provided it let the purse alone. If you come to the Lord, you must come property and all; and let it, as well as yourself, be His. Take warning by the fate of the young man, who "went away sorrowful, because he had great possessions." There should not be an hoof left behind.

So much for the middle stage and its lessons. A word now on the last stage. Its solemn lesson is this: "He that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall be suddenly cut off, and that without remedy." Need we delay over the supposed difficulty of God hardening Pharaoh's heart? Remember that it is just as often put the other way, that Pharaoh hardened his own heart. The two things are really identical; and the

explanation, we believe, is to be found in this, that Pharaoh, by his conduct, put himself under the operation of the invariable law, according to which a man's heart becomes harder, the longer he resists Divine mercy and grace. Inasmuch as Pharaoh himself resisted, he hardened his own heart. Inasmuch as the law, under whose operation he brought himself, was God's law, God hardened his heart. It is the same process viewed from its two sides. And the fact that there is such a law of hardening to which every one subjects himself who resists the grace of God, should impress us all most deeply with the danger of resisting the Spirit of God. It is a great mistake to suppose that God singled out Pharaoh, or that He ever singles out any one and says, "I will harden his heart"; and then proceeds to do it. The supposition is monstrous. But the solemn truth is this, that by the operation of that well-known law, according to which the soul becomes less and less susceptible to impressions which have been resisted, God hardens the heart of every man and woman that does not yield to Him. Think how many men have hardened themselves in dishonesty, by first using for a little time a small sum of money not their own, which prepared them by-and-by for using a larger sum, fully intending to replace it, and so it went on, the hardening process going on all the while, till it ended in the most shameless robbery, and brought final ruin and disgrace. How many men, again, are "gospel hardened," as it is fitly called. They have so often listened to the appeals of the gospel without yielding to them, that their hearts have become as "hard as the nether millstone," and the most earnest appeals

have not the slightest effect. Pharaoh's case is not at all peculiar. It is typical of thousands in every generation. God dealt most tenderly with him, with the utmost long-suffering and forbearance, through scorn and evasion, through defiance, through sham prayers and sham promises, sham repentance, and sham submission; but all in vain, his heart grew harder and harder all the time, till he was swallowed up in the angry waters of the Red Sea. Who ever had more chances of escape? Yet what was the end? Had he only regarded the voice which came so gently at the first, or the harmless sign, all had been well; or had he but recognised "the finger of God" as the magicians did (viii. 13), he would have had nothing to fear from His "outstretched arm."

Wherever there is sin, there must be destruction in the end. Destruction either for the sinner or for the sin. The wages of sin is *Death*, necessarily; and the only question is, shall it be death to the sin, or death to the sinner? The sin and the sinner cannot both live. One or other must die. God takes no pleasure in the destruction of the sinner, and therefore it is that He seeks to destroy the sin. Had Pharaoh allowed his sin to perish under the hand of God, he himself would have been saved. But clinging to his sin, he perished in it. Either sin in us must be destroyed now; or the time is coming when we shall be destroyed in it. As we said in the beginning, we have our Pharaoh side and our Israel side. Which side will you hold by? If we hold by the Pharaoh side of rebellion against God, we must "all likewise perish." But if we hold by the Israel side, if we cling to the covenant which makes us God's chil-

dren, then, though the old man be crucified, and buried as under the Red Sea waves, the new man will emerge on the farther shore, with a song of praise on his lips, and the march to the Land of Promise before him. But this leads us into the second great division of our subject, which will be considered in the next lecture: How God saved Israel.

IV.

ISRAEL SAVED.

EXODUS XII.–XIV.

THE tenth plague seemed thoroughly to subdue the obdurate heart of Pharaoh. He attempted no more compromises. He came by night and besought Israel to go, taking their children and their cattle with them, and even went so far as to sue for mercy himself (xii. 32).

And yet the Exodus is by no means complete. There must be something done for Israel as well as against Pharaoh. Israel must be saved as well as Pharaoh subdued. These two processes, the subduing of Pharaoh and the saving of Israel, are not sharply separated in time. They go on in parallel lines. But it is quite easy, and I think we shall find it advantageous, to separate them in thought. And accordingly, having in our last lecture followed the course of Pharaoh to his complete overthrow in the waters of the Red Sea, we now return to follow the course of Israel along the way of salvation which the Lord prepared for them. We have already (Lecture II.) witnessed the preparatory stages of the process by which Israel is saved; we come now to the great salvation itself, as set forth so strikingly in the chapters before us (xii.–xiv.)

The more recent plagues had fallen upon Egypt alone.

The children of Israel were saved from them. But though the fact of salvation was obvious, the way of salvation had not yet been indicated. But now that the last and heaviest plague is about to fall, not only will Israel be saved from it, but the ground on which salvation is bestowed will be made plain. Not only the difference between Egypt and Israel, but the reason of the difference, is signalized in the history of the tenth plague. This will appear as we proceed.

A sentence of death is hanging over Egypt — over every home in it. But Israel is in Egypt still. Why not then over the homes of Israel too? Were they so much better than the Egyptians? Surely not. Beyond all doubt there could have been found amongst the Egyptians many whose character was superior to that of the average Israelite, and certainly the children of Israel would have among them a sufficient number of poor enough specimens of humanity. If the test had been one of character, it is quite certain that the line would not have run so as to range all Egypt on the one side, and all Israel on the other. No one can suppose that all the real worth and excellence were on the side of the latter, and all the meanness and wickedness on the side of the former. In fact, the children of Israel had shared only too deeply in the sins of Egypt, and accordingly if they are to be saved, it must be on some other ground than their own merits. On what ground, then? If we read the twelfth chapter we shall see that pains were taken to show them that it must be on the ground of an *Atonement*, provided by God and accepted by themselves.

"Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb . . . . without blemish . . . . and shall kill it . . . . and they shall take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts, and on the upper door posts of the houses; . . . . and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt" (ver. 3–13). Here we have a sacrifice appointed by God as the condition of their salvation, the underlying idea being that of redemption, as we find by reference to Exodus xiii. 13: "Every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem."*

The associations here, which at first seem unnatural, are quite suggestive. The ass was an unclean animal, and therefore unfit to be offered in sacrifice to the Lord. So it must be redeemed by offering a lamb, a clean animal, in its place. Such was the mode of redemption, the clean for the unclean — failing which, the animal's neck was to be broken. And then immediately following, "all the firstborn of man shalt thou redeem."

When the lamb was offered, then it expressed the

* It is important to remember that the firstborn represented the family, so that judgment of the firstborn stood for judgment upon all, and the redemption of the firstborn stood for the redemption of all; and further, inasmuch as Israel was the firstborn among nations, the redemption of Israel represented the redemption of all nations, which was to be brought about in the fulness of the time.

idea that the offerer deserved himself to die, but that he was redeemed from the death which was his due by the substitution of the lamb. Does not this throw some light on what at first seemed an unreasonable and unaccountable regulation?

Observe further, that no one could present the prescribed offering, sincerely, without penitential feelings in his heart. It amounted to a confession of sin and unworthiness. And besides penitence, faith also was involved, together with the obedience which always follows true faith. The children of Israel "bowed the head and worshipped," and "went away, and did as the Lord had commanded" (ver. 27, 28). It was indeed a searching trial of their faith. There was abundant room for scepticism. "How can it do any good," one might say, "to kill a lamb and sprinkle its blood on the door?" And another might say, "Where is the necessity for any such performance? Is not Pharaoh willing to let us go? Is not his power effectually broken by the plagues? Let us march out ourselves, and never mind the killing of the lamb."

If the thing had happened in these days of fashionable scepticism, this would, no doubt, have been the way in which large numbers would have responded to the Divine directions. The wise ones would have scoffed at the others as ignorant and superstitious people, who had not sense enough to see that it was honest and good lives, and not the sacrifice of a lamb, that would commend them to God. And the consequence would have been that all these exceedingly rational people would have had a visit from the destroying angel on

that terrible night. As it was, the children of Israel gave no harbour to such sceptical questionings; they believed, obeyed, and were saved.

Possibly, some of them were not quite free from superstition in the observance of the rite. They may have imagined that there was some magical virtue in the blood of the lamb; and it is quite possible that some of them might have added certain Egyptian incantations or "enchantments" to make sure work of it. Very foolish, no doubt; but not necessarily fatal. If they did what they were commanded, they were safe, even though they may have done many other things that were quite unnecessary. And even so it no doubt will be in the case of multitudes of our Ritualistic and Romanist brethren, who really believe that the Lord Jesus died for their sins, and trust in His atoning blood, and faithfully try to follow His steps by leading good, devout, and true lives. They may go through performances which are worse than useless. They may pray to the Virgin Mary and to all the saints, and do many other vain and foolish things; and though all this is much to be deplored, who will deny that the Lord accepts them? Far, far better, be in the position of the most superstitious ritualist, who really tries to know and do the Lord's will, than of the cold conceited sceptic, who doubts everything and does nothing!

But while there seems to be no place among the children for the cold conceited sceptic, there is room enough for the honest doubter whose heart is in the right place. It is altogether likely that there would be many of the children of Israel who were perplexed by the directions

given them that day. If the way of deliverance had been one which an intelligent man could see through—if they could only have understood it and comprehended how it was calculated to accomplish the end in view, it would have been so satisfactory. But being unable to see through it, they have grave doubts about the whole thing. Nevertheless, as obedient children, not waiting to understand it all, but willing to leave it in the dark till God Himself will cast light upon it, they do as they are commanded, kill the lamb and sprinkle the blood. The faith of such as these, though weak and clouded over with dark doubts, was yet sufficient to lead them to obey the word of the Lord. And that was enough.

We have seen that the idea of redemption underlies the sacrifice, and that the bringing of it implied penitence, faith, and obedience on the part of the offerer; and so far we can discern some reason in what at first appears unreasonable. But there was much more in it than this, as was manifest when at last the full light of the New Testament was cast back upon it. There was a typical prophecy in it, pointing forward to something far better, away in the dim future, the real atonement, of which it was a mere shadow. In this paschal lamb, indeed, we have the chief Old Testament type of Christ, the divinely appointed sacrifice. Again and again in this Book of Exodus, xxiii. 18 for example, this paschal sacrifice is spoken of as the sacrifice of God ("*My* sacrifice"), which is fully explained, when John the Baptist, pointing to the approaching Saviour, says, "Behold *the Lamb of God*, which taketh away the sin of the world." The lamb of the Passover was really nothing in itself. It

was the occasion of the development of suitable feelings in the hearts of the people, and the means of testing and proving the believing and obedient ones in Israel. But in itself it was but a picture, a picture of the coming Saviour. And herein we see why *a lamb* was chosen: "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isa. liii. 7),—why it must be "*without blemish*," to typify Him who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners" (Heb. vii. 26), and needed no atonement for Himself,—why it was *kept four days* alive before it was slain, the four days, "a day for a year" (Ezek. iv. 6), perhaps representing the life of Christ before His death from the time when He was set apart by baptism for His work,—above all, why the Lamb must be *slain* (Rev. xiii. 8); and it is especially interesting to remember that "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us" at that very Passover time, probably at the very hour for the offering of the paschal sacrifice, "between the two evenings."

There are other matters of detail; but our plan admits only of our taking up the broad features. As for the Passover feast, it will come up for consideration along with the other feasts when we reach the Book of Leviticus. Meantime, we only call attention to the pre-eminent place it held in the Jewish calendar, as indicated by the way in which it is referred to in the passage before us, *e. g.*, "it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover" (ver. 27); "it is a night to be much observed unto the Lord for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the Lord to be observed of all the children

of Israel in their generations" (ver. 42). Correspondingly in the New Testament, we find that the interest of the history concentrates in that night of the Lord, when "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us." Much is said of His wonderful life, but still more of His atoning death. The same prominence is given to the great sacrifice in the apostolic teaching, which is characteristically summed up by the great apostle of the Gentiles, as the preaching of Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

There are still difficulties to the human understanding in the doctrine of the atonement. But it is important to remember that it is not necessary in order to our salvation that we should have an adequate theory of the atonement, any more than it was for the children of Israel to know all the typical relations of their sacrifice in order to be saved by it. On the other hand, there will be much less excuse for us, if we stumble at "the offence of the cross," than there would have been for the children of Israel to slight the sacrifice of the Passover. We have history and experience to appeal to, which they had not. It is emphatically "a tried stone" that God has laid in Zion as the foundation of our hopes for eternity; and as we think of generation after generation of storm-tossed souls that have found a needed refuge there, scepticism may well be silent, as faith lifts up her voice and sings:—

> "Rock of ages cleft for me,
> Let me hide myself in Thee."

With the atonement comes the *New Life*. "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months, it

shall be the first month of the year to you" (ver. 2). The same thought is still more strikingly suggested by a comparison of the 42d and 51st verses. After the night of the atoning sacrifice, comes the first day of the new life. "This month shall be unto you the beginning of months." What does this mean? It means that all that had gone before must be counted out. All the months, the years of slavery, let them be forgotten. It is the same still in the experience of the saved. The years we spent before we turned to the Lord, are not worth counting; the best that can happen to them is to be buried out of sight. O ye who have not yet accepted the atonement and entered on the new life of liberty and obedience, you are wasting your time, you are spending strength for nought, you are living years that shall be counted out from God's Book of Life.

The new life is nourished on the lamb that has been slain. It was on the strength of that food, that the children of Israel set out on their journey to the Land of Promise. So in the New Testament, "I am the Bread of Life," says Christ the Lamb of God, "he that eateth Me, the same shall live by Me."

"And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste" (ver. 11). The time is coming for sitting under the vine and fig tree, when the Land of Promise is reached; but while yet on the way, though there is food convenient, there is no time for continuous feasting. We may not yet build tabernacles on the mountain, we must go down to the plain and work.

Considerable stress is laid both here (ver. 35, 36) and

in other places (Gen. xv. 14; Exod. iii. 21, 22) on the fact that in going they took not a little of the wealth of Egypt with them. An unfortunate translation has caused much unnecessary difficulty at this point. I refer to the use of the words "borrowed" and "lent," as if it were a case of dishonesty. The former word is used hundreds of times in its ordinary signification of "asked" or "demanded"; and why it should be translated "borrowed" here is a mystery. As to the other word, it never means "to lend." It is what is called the Hiphil or causative tense of the same word "to ask"; literally, it is "caused them to ask," and the idea is, as expressed fully in another place, that the Egyptians not only urged them to go, but entreated them to take these things with them. The Egyptians not only wanted to be rid of their troublesome guests, but wished to gain favour with them, and with the dread Power who had sent such terrible plagues; and so they pressed these things upon them. Accordingly the children of Israel went out with a large quantity of the wealth of Egypt in a portable form. The wickedness, the vanities, the follies of Egypt must be left behind; but some of its treasures are portable, and quite compatible even with a wilderness journey.

Notice in passing, the mixed multitude that went along with them from Egypt (ver. 38). We have here one of those illustrations, of which there are so many throughout the Scriptures, of the universality of God's mercy. Even at this time, of comparative exclusiveness, none were kept out who wanted to come in. Subsequent events proved that this mixed multitude was no desirable addition to the hosts of Israel, but no

means seem to have been taken to keep any of them back. Then, as now, the Lord was willing to accept a mixed multitude, provided only they are united in desire and determination to leave Egypt and sin, and follow on to Canaan. The multitude will no longer be "mixed," when they have reached the New Jerusalem. They will be thoroughly homogeneous then, with one heart and one mind and one song, and all clothed in the same "fine linen, white and clean, which is the righteousness of the Saints."

And even now there is a certain homogeneity reached, by the change which has passed upon all who together have entered on the new life, as is indicated by the new name given to them all in common, in the 41st verse. "And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt." The slaves of Egypt before, they are "the hosts of the Lord" now.

A twofold experience marks the beginning of the new life. First, a new and blessed consciousness of the Divine presence and guidance. "The Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them by the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day, and night: He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people" (xiii. 21, 22). We may not even enter on the wealth of meaning here. Enough to have pointed out the place it occupies in the story of Israel's salvation.

The other experience is the result of this, and is re-

corded in the 14th chapter. The Lord led His people in such a way that they were confronted once more with their old enemy; and under such circumstances that there seemed no way of escape. But the Lord Himself made a way. "Moses said unto the people, Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will show you to-day; for the Egyptians, whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever" (ver. 13). The result we know. The power of the old enemy was completely broken. Thus too, in the beginning of the Christian life, there often comes a testing time, when the old enemy, out of whose bondage we seemed to have been delivered, pursues and overtakes, and tries to bring us into his power again. But if the Lord be with us, we need not fear. "There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." God will make a way of escape as He did for His people at the Red Sea. Only "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." For it is written, "the Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace" (ver. 14).

"Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." And as you continue waiting on the Lord, you will presently hear a voice, like that which came to Moses of old, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward" (ver. 15); and though the angry sea be right in front, you need not fear to go, for He will make a way for you. "Thy way is in the sea, Thy path in the

mighty waters, and Thy footsteps are not known," yet "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." And presently we shall find that the power of our old enemy is completely broken, and we are safe.

The Exodus is now complete. Pharaoh is not only subdued, but destroyed, and Israel is saved. "Thus the Lord saved Israel that day" (ver. 30), and on the further shore they sang with glad and grateful hearts the first Song of Salvation (chap. xv.)

It may be well now to gather into one view the various stages of the process by which Israel was saved. We shall thus have a most useful analysis of the soul's experience in its Exodus from the bondage of sin. The question is sometimes discussed as to whether conversion is sudden or gradual; and the answer must necessarily turn chiefly on a definition of terms. But while in a certain logical sense conversion must be sudden, inasmuch as it means turning to the Lord, and surely there must be a point of time when a man first turns from his sin to his Saviour; yet in its ordinary acceptation, conversion is really a complex experience, having in it distinctly marked stages, which may come in such rapid succession that the whole process may be accomplished in a single day, or a single hour, but which may be separated from each other by intervals of some length, as in the case of the children of Israel. The clearly marked separation of the different stages in the history of Israel's salvation from Egyptian bondage makes it especially valuable for the purpose of that analysis which we shall now endeavour to present.

Looking back then over the experience of the people during the lengthened history of the Exodus, we discover the following stages. First, we found them "*sighing and crying*" (ii. 23), next "*believing and worshipping*" (iv. 31), though the believing of this stage is shown by the subsequent history to be very different, not in kind, but in degree, from the believing which is spoken of in the last verse of the 14th chapter, where the originally feeble spark of faith had been developed into full assurance. Subsequently *Pharaoh's grasp is loosened* by the successive shocks of the plagues recorded in chapters v.–xi.; next we see them *sheltered by the blood of the lamb* (xii. 1–30); thereafter *setting out to Canaan* (31–51); then, after being "*baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea*" (xiv.), we find them *singing on the farther shore* (xv.) Seven stages: from the "sighing and crying" at the beginning to the singing for joy at the end. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted."

"THUS THE LORD SAVED ISRAEL"; and thus He will save you, who are still in bondage. Only cry to the Lord, and continue waiting on Him, and in course of time—it may be much shorter than in the case of Israel, there is no reason why it should not be this very day, this very hour—He will fill your heart with heavenly music, and your tongue with joyful praise. And you will join the long ranks of those who can take up the words of the Psalmist, and say, "I waited patiently for the Lord, and He inclined unto me and heard my cry; He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock and established my goings; and He put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God."

V.

THE WILDERNESS.

EXODUS XV.-XVIII.

THE history of Israel in the wilderness really covers the space of forty years, and fills all that remains of the five books of Moses. But it so happens that in the experience of the first two months before Sinai was reached, there is so much varied instruction, that by the study of these chapters alone we may obtain a quite comprehensive view of the lessons of the wilderness. And here again we have a series of seven.* In our last lecture we found seven stages in the process by which Israel was saved, ending in the song which they sung on the further shore of the Red Sea. The last of that series is the first of the next. Where Exodus experience ends, Wilderness experience begins.

I. Our plan will not allow us to dwell upon *the Song*, however tempting as a historical memorial, as a literary treasure, and as a repository of spiritual truth. We shall only call attention to its most characteristic and outstanding feature, the entire absence of self-glorifica-

* Three stages, mentioned in Numbers xxxiii. where the itinerary is given, viz., the camp by the Red Sea (ver. 10), Dophkah and Alush (ver. 12, 13), are omitted in the Exodus record, probably because nothing worthy of note happened at these places.

tion or mere national exultation. From the beginning to the end it celebrates the praises of Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel. In the British Museum there is an ancient papyrus with a copy of the celebrated poem of Pentaur, "the Homer of Egypt," who flourished in the reign of Rameses II., and was therefore a contemporary of Moses. The poem commemorates the great victory of Rameses over the Khita. It is exceedingly interesting to compare the manner in which the Egyptian poet celebrates the Egyptian victory over the Semitic Khita, with that in which the Hebrew poet celebrates the victory of his branch of the Semites over the hosts of Pharaoh. There is considerable similarity in style between the one poem and the other, just enough to indicate that they belong to the same period; but, how different in substance. The one is full of man and his praises; the other makes nothing of man (not even Moses himself is once mentioned in it) and everything of God. "Sing unto the Lord, for HE hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation; He is my God, and I will prepare Him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him."

Such is the strain of the Hebrew epic. Whereas in the Egyptian epic it is the praises of Pharaoh that are sung throughout; and when the god of Egypt is referred to, it is in some such fashion as this: "I (Pharaoh) have built for thee propylæa and wonderful works of stone, I have raised to thee masts for all times, I have conveyed the obelisks for thee from the island of Elephantine. It

was I who had brought for thee the everlasting stone, who caused the ships to go for thee on the sea, to bring thee the productions of foreign nations. Where has it been told that such a thing was done at any other time? Let him be put to shame who rejects thy commands, but good be to him who acknowledges thee, O Amon!"* Worldly religiousness makes much of what man will do for God; the true religion makes everything of what God does for man. "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." There is no better sign of genuine conversion, of having crossed the Red Sea and left Egypt behind, than to cease speaking and even thinking of self, and begin thinking ever and speaking much of the goodness and glory of the Lord.

II. It was a glorious song; but alas! it did not last. In three days its jubilant notes have died away, and miserable murmurings have taken its place, for the children of Israel are *at Marah* now (ver. 22–26), smarting under the disappointment at the bitter taste of the waters there. In Deuteronomy viii. 2, 3, we get an insight into the Divine purpose in this and similar dealings with His people: "Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, *to know what was in thine heart*, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no. And He humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger and fed thee with manna . . . . that He might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that

* "Brugsch," vol. ii., p. 56.

proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

Briefly, there were two great objects which God had in view; first to show the people themselves, and next to show them Himself. Neither of these lessons can be taught at a sitting. It is only by degrees that we learn how poor and weak and helpless we are; and how great and loving and helpful God is; and so we need not wonder that, with a people so slow to learn, the lesson should extend over forty years. But though it takes a long time to teach it practically, we can see it very readily in a picture; and it is painted there in characters quite large and striking, on this Marah page of Israel's history. What had become of that splendid faith in God which found expression in the Red Sea song? Why did it never occur to these people that He who had opened a way through the sea, could very easily provide for them in the desert? Probably if the combination of circumstances had been exactly the same as before, their hearts would not have failed them. But when are combinations of circumstances exactly the same? And when the new combination arises, the old faith is apt to fail.

The truth is, that while faith is very easy after a great deliverance, it is exceeding hard before it. It is very easy to sing a song of joy on the eastern shore of the Red Sea. On the western shore it was different, and three days after, it will be as difficult as ever on the shore of Marah. Does not this show what was in Israel's heart: and does it not also show what is in ours? When our hearts are filled with gratitude to God

at a time when there is nothing to try us, let us not build too much upon it as an evidence of Christian character, for it may not be so certain after all whether it is God or self we are in love with. The test will be when sorrow comes, when you are thirsty, and, stooping down to drink, you find the waters bitter—then, if you can still praise God, and trust His love and power, you prove yourself a disciple indeed. But with many, the time of trial is a time of humiliating disclosures of weakness and faithlessness, as it was in the case of Israel so lately triumphant, but whose very first trouble was too much for them.

But God does not leave His people thus. Having taught them the sad lesson of what they are, He presently comforts them by showing them what He is. As soon as they cried to Him, He found (how easily) a way to make the bitter waters sweet, and thus made Himself known as Jehovah the Healer (ver. 26). He had already fully revealed Himself as Jehovah the Saviour, their great Deliverer from Egyptian bondage. His work as the healer of His people follows next in order. "Bless Jehovah, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases."

He acts the part of the Physician, first in sending the affliction, in leading His people to Marah. It is the surgery by which the deep sore is exposed. And then, more especially, in healing the bitter waters and the disappointed hearts.

The Marah "statute and ordinance" deserves attention as we pass (ver. 26). It is the first trace of Law in

God's dealing with His people. Up to this time it has been all Gospel. They have had simply to "stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord." Not a word has been said to them about "doing that which is right in His sight," and "keeping His statutes," till now. Thus we find that the order of the New Testament is also the order of the Old. It is not, "obey and be saved"; but "be saved and obey." It is not, "obey in order that you may be saved," but "obey because you have been saved." There had been certain acts of obedience, of course; but these were all in the way of accepting a salvation already provided, as for instance when they killed the lamb and sprinkled the blood, which was simply their acceptance of the atonement provided by the Lord; or again, when at the word of the Lord they walked through the sea; but up till this time there is not a single intimation of good deeds as a condition of blessing. God did not give them His law in Egypt and tell them if they kept it He would bring them out. No: He first brings them out, and then says, "Keep My law."

The promise which is appended is very precious: "If thou wilt diligently hearken, etc., I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee." What kind of diseases had he brought on the Egyptians? Plagues. The Lord has no plagues for His people who walk in His ways. Afflictions He has—they are part of the covenant of His grace (Ps. lxxxix. 30–33). But plagues He has none. Calamities, none. "There shall no evil befall him." "All things work together for

good to them that love God." "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth to them that keep His covenant and His testimonies." Whatever He does is in the way of healing, never of plague: "I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians; for I am Jehovah *that healeth thee*."

III. A short distance from Marah was *Elim*, with its shade, its refreshment, its rest; its twelve wells of waters, and threescore and ten palm trees. Is there ever a Marah without an Elim near it, if only we follow on in the way the Lord marks out for us through the wilderness? The notice of Elim occupies less than four lines, while there are as many verses in the record of Marah, and a whole chapter following about the Wilderness of Sin; and we are apt to draw the hasty inference that the bitter experiences were the rule, and the delightful ones the exception. And so it often seems in the chequered life of the tried disciple of the Lord. But look again. The bitter time at Marah was quite short, though it occupies a great deal of space in the history. These four verses tell the story probably of as many hours or less. But the four lines about Elim are the story of three weeks, during which "they *encamped there* by the waters."

We are very apt to put the varied scene of our experience in false perspective. We put our troubles in the foreground of the picture of life which an unhealthy imagination paints. This Marah will occupy feet in the front, while that Elim has only inches in the rear; and we forget that the inches of Elim represent miles, while the delineation of Marah is larger than life. When

troubles come, the time seems long; when troubles have gone, the time seems short; and so, many are apt to think that they are hardly dealt with, whereas if they would look more carefully into the Lord's dealings with them, they might find that they have far more to be thankful for than to grieve over. Hours at Marah are followed by weeks at Elim.

IV. Another trial follows. The Lord "suffered them to hunger" in *the Wilderness of Sin*. Again the people murmur and complain; and again the Lord provides for them abundantly (chap. xvi.) The miracle of the manna here demands our attention. That it was a miracle is very obvious. It has indeed a natural basis, as the plagues of Egypt had; for there is a natural product of the wilderness which answers, so far as appearance goes, to the description here given of the manna. But when we consider, among other things, this, that the entire production of the whole year would not have served the children of Israel for a single day, we see how absurd it is to try to explain the miracle away as a mere natural phenomenon.

But while the manna of the wilderness cannot explain the miracle, it undoubtedly has some connection with it; the same kind of connection which there was between the few small loaves which the Saviour blessed, and the large supply with which He fed the thousands on the hillside once and again. When these hungry multitudes were before Him, He did not introduce a fresh creation, and supply them with food, the like of which they had never seen before. He began by asking: "How many loaves have ye?" And then, taking what there was

readiest to hand, He made use of it to supply the people's wants. He followed the same course in the desert. And by doing His wonders thus, in the line of nature's more ordinary operations, He helped them and us to understand and realize that the most ordinary operations of nature are truly Divine, and have the element of miracle in them for those who have eyes to see, to see beyond those second causes to the Great First Cause, "through nature up to nature's God." To use the illustration of Dr. Hamilton, these miracles are the true "autograph of the Creator," only "written in a larger type," that even shortsighted eyes may recognise the signature.

The great lesson of the manna is that already referred to in a passage quoted from Deuteronomy: "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." How beautifully this is illustrated in the history of our Saviour's temptation we all know.

But there are some more specific lessons which are suggested by our Lord's own teaching in relation to the miracle of the manna, in the sixth chapter of John: "I am that Bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness and are dead. . . . . I am the living Bread that came down from heaven" (ver. 48–51). Again in Rev. ii. 17, we have the promise: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna." Thus we learn, on the highest authority, to take the manna of the wilderness as a symbol of the spiritual nourishment which our souls need, and which is furnished in Christ the Lord. Christ and His word is the food of the soul;

and when we carry this thought with us, we find many lessons in the chapter before us, such as these: our urgent *need* of this food—its coming from heaven as a *gift*—a *free* gift, free as the air we breathe—in *abundance* —quite *accessible*, all round the tents (Rom. x. 6–9)—yet needing to be *gathered* with diligence—gathered *daily*—gathered *early*, in the morning hours, ere yet the heat and the bustle of the day has begun—and *used* as soon as gathered, not laid up in the memory as a store-house, but worked into the substance of the life at once. Note also the evidence from the story of the manna, that the institution of the Sabbath is older than the Decalogue —evidence so plain that in order to evade it, those who make it a mere Jewish ordinance must summon to their aid an ingenuity which could explain away anything.

V. The next stage is *Rephidim;* and here a new trial awaits the people (xvii. 1–7). There was no water to drink. It is the same story over again, of the people's murmurs and the Lord's mercy, and a repetition of the same sad lesson about themselves and the same glad lesson about God. We shall not, therefore, dwell on the general teaching of the passage, but rather look at it in the light which the New Testament throws back upon it. In 1 Corinthians x. 2–4, the Apostle Paul, speaking of the fathers to whom all these things happened as types (ver. 11) for our instruction, says that they "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all eat the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ." In this passage the sacramental idea is quite apparent.

As the passage of the Red Sea is associated in the apostle's mind with Christian baptism, so the experience of the people in the wilderness of Sin and at Rephidim suggests the Lord's Supper, or rather the spiritual nourishment and refreshment of which it was the sacramental sign. And just as Christ had associated Himself with the manna, the apostle associates Him with the water at Rephidim: "that Rock was Christ." It is worthy of notice that he does not say the water was Christ. So, too, Christ Himself, though He said, "I am the Bread of life," never said, "I am the Water of life." Again and again He spoke of giving, but never of being, the water of life. What is the reason of this? Is it not that the water is the familiar symbol of the Holy Spirit? (See as an illustration of this, Isaiah xliv. 3, for the Old Testament, and John vii. 37–39, for the New). The Rock was Christ, from whom, after He had been smitten on Calvary, there flowed the full and blessed pentecostal stream, that river of salvation which has ever since followed the Church in her journey through the wilderness.

VI. The experience at Rephidim is followed by *the contest with Amalek* (ver. 8–16). If the children of Israel thought, as many no doubt would, that after Pharaoh was drowned in the Red Sea, they had no other enemy to encounter, they were greatly mistaken. There were also foes of the wilderness to meet. Though we may be delivered from the bondage of sin, it does not follow that our warfare is at an end. Rather does it now properly begin. As long as sin reigns there is no warfare; and as for the overthrow of its power in our hearts, it is

God's work rather than ours. It is ours *then* to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." But as soon as the bondage of sin is broken, then begins the struggle against the evil that still dwells, though it no longer reigns, in the heart. This is that Amalek of the wilderness journey. And here the command is no longer as before, to "stand still and see," but, "Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek" (ver. 9). Yet Divine grace is as needful as ever. While the picked men went down into the plain to fight, the best men went up to the top of the hill to pray (ver. 10).

Thus, as ever, the Old Testament has the same doctrine as the New: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God that worketh in you to will and to do of His good pleasure." The first part corresponds to the fighting on the plain; the second to the praying on the hill-top. Working there must be—not to provide or procure salvation, which is done already, done fully and thoroughly, and once for all, by the shedding of the blood of the sacrificial Lamb—not working for salvation, but working out salvation; a very different thing. But there must be praying as well. And it would appear from the contest with Amalek that the praying was of even more consequence than the fighting. "And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed." It is when the praying flags that the fighting fails.

Wherefore, brethren, "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might." "For we wrestle not against

flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." (See the whole passage, Ephesians vi. 10–18). How appropriate the altar motto which remains as a memorial of the conflict, Jehovah-nissi (ver. 15), *i. e.*, Jehovah my Banner; and how sure the guarantee, that, protracted as the conflict must be, repeated generation after generation (ver. 16), till the days of the Church militant are over, the issue will be the annihilation of the enemy (ver. 14), and the eternal triumph of the Lord's redeemed ones.

VII. One scene more in the wilderness before the grand drama of Sinai. It is *the meeting with Jethro* the Kenite (chap. xviii.) There are friends as well as foes in the desert.

A veil is drawn over the affecting domestic scene, when Moses meets again his wife and children, who had spent the time in Midian while he had been doing the Lord's work in Egypt and by the way of the wilderness. But several particulars are given of the meeting with Jethro, which incidentally throw a beautiful light on the character of Moses, and give not a little instruction as to the way in which we should conduct ourselves towards those who, though not against us as Amalek was, are not with us, as Jethro was not with Israel. Observe the humility and politeness of Moses (ver. 7); but above all his charity. "And Jethro (ver. 12) took a burnt-offering and sacrifices for God: and Aaron came, and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses' father-in-law before God." No close communion there. Had Moses been of the same spirit as many of our

modern ecclesiastics he would have said: "I am perfectly willing to treat you politely and kindly when I meet you simply as a friend, but I cannot join hands with you at the altar." But Moses and Aaron were men of a different spirit. And was it not a better one?

Later on in the history (Jud. i. 16) we read: "And the children of the Kenite, Moses' father-in-law, went up out of the city of palm trees with the children of Judah into the wilderness of Judah, which lieth to the south of Arad; and they went and dwelt among the people." Treat the Kenites kindly and charitably, and by-and-by they may come to dwell among you. "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without." By so doing you may soon bring them in.

Consider also how Moses received the suggestions of Jethro. He might have thought: "what presumption in this Midianite to dictate to the ambassador of Jehovah!" But Moses was a man of a very different spirit. In Montreal, some years ago, a certain English nobleman who had been recently converted, and was preaching the gospel to large multitudes who gathered to hear him, unfortunately had his heart lifted up within him, and began to speak bitterly and scornfully of the churches of Christ in the city. An excellent and revered Presbyterian elder approached the young nobleman in the kindest way, spoke with great appreciation of the value of his work in preaching the gospel, but suggested that it would be better for the cause if he would cease abusing Christians and Christian churches, and confine himself to the preaching of Christ. In reply he curled his lip in scorn, and said, "I take my counsel from the Lord!" What a

contrast between the grand nobleman of the olden time, and the small one of yesterday. Moses might with some reason have claimed a monopoly of Divine counsel. God had chosen him out from all other men to make known His will to him; but when Jethro, though an outsider, and one who had only good common sense on his side, makes his suggestion, Moses does not scorn to listen to his advice, and take it too. And the event showed that the Lord fully approved His servant's course.

And now, before we leave the wilderness, with its lessons of Christian experience, let us notice how each successive trial brings out some new and substantial revelation of God. Of our seven wilderness scenes four have been scenes of trial. Each of them brings out in strong relief some new and blessed relation which the Lord holds to His people. The first, Marah, shows me Jehovah-rophi, the Lord my Healer. The next presents Him as the Bread of Life. The third sets forth the Spirit of Christ as the Water of Life; and the last tells me Jehovah-nissi, the Lord is my Banner. May we not welcome our sorest trials, when they have in them the promise of such precious and blessed revelations of Jehovah-Jesus!

"All the way my Saviour leads me,
Cheers each winding path I tread;
Gives me grace for every trial,
Feeds me with the living bread.
Though my weary steps may falter,
And my soul athirst may be;
Gushing from the Rock before me,
Lo, a spring of joy I see!

"All the way my Saviour leads me,
Oh, the fulness of His love;
Perfect rest to me is promised,
In my Father's house above!
When my spirit clothed immortal,
Wings its flight to realms of day;
This my song through endless ages,
Jesus led me all the way!"

VI.

THE SINAI REVELATION.

EXODUS XIX., XX.

JEHOVAH had said to Moses at the burning bush, "When thou hast brought forth the people out of Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain" (Exod. iii. 12). And now the promise is about to be fulfilled, for there is Israel encamped before the mount (xix. 2).

The characteristic feature of the Sinai revelation is the law; but it is important to observe that it is not law as a means of salvation, but law as a sequel of salvation. This appears very clearly in the preliminary sketch which was given to Moses as soon as the people had settled themselves at the base of the mountain. "And Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel." The message, you

observe, begins with what the Lord had done for them, and then goes on to what He expects them to do for Him. "Ye have seen what I did"; "Now, therefore, if ye"—such is the order, the same order as in the New Testament, in the Epistle to the Romans for instance, where, after setting forth first the need of salvation (chap. i.–iii. 20), and then the salvation freely provided (chap. iii. 21–xi.), the law of Christian living is introduced: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies," etc. (chap. xii. 1). It is true indeed, that the law is introduced as a condition of something to follow: "If ye will obey My voice . . . . *then* . . . . "; but that something is not salvation, which had been bestowed unconditionally, freely, before (ver. 4); it is the enjoyment of those special blessings which "accompany and flow from" the original act of salvation. Clearly, then, the law of Moses was given not as a way of salvation, but as a means of training those who had been already saved. If this simple and evident fact were only borne in mind in the reading of the Old Testament, endless perplexities and confusions of thought would be avoided.

Observe, also, the kind of blessings which are promised. How many are there who will persist in maintaining that the old covenant offered mere temporal blessing, while it is the distinctive feature of the new to promise spiritual blessing. It is true that temporal blessings were included under the old covenant, just as they are under the new; and though they do hold a more prominent place in the old, as was indeed to be expected, yet it is a slander upon that covenant to say that these were *the*

blessings it offered. The great blessings of the old covenant were undoubtedly spiritual, as is manifest here: "If ye will obey My voice and keep My covenant, then ye shall be to me a peculiar treasure above all people"; "and ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." Nearness to God, dearness to God, holiness—these were the characteristic blessings of the old covenant. These promises are among the richest and most deeply spiritual in the whole Bible; and it is with great reluctance that, yielding to the exigency of our plan, we refrain from entering into the wealth of meaning which each separate word conveys. Let me only notice in leaving it, that when the Apostle Peter wishes to express in the very strongest terms the highest privileges of the children of God under the new dispensation, he can do nothing better than quote these old but "exceeding great and precious promises" (1 Pet. ii. 9).

Passing from the preliminary sketch to the full revelation, we are met first by a new manifestation of God. In Leviticus xix. 2 we read: "Ye shall be holy; for I the Lord your God am holy." Israel is now called to be "a holy nation" (ver. 6); and in order to prepare them to obey the call, God reveals Himself to them as "the Holy One of Israel." It is interesting and instructive to note the order of these revelations. You remember (Exod. vi. 3) how the first revelation God made of Himself to His chosen ones was a revelation of *fatherly care* and protecting power, a providential revelation of Himself, so to speak. Next came the revelation of *redeeming love*, the main import of the name Jehovah, a very rich and full and blessed revelation, in the course of

which we see His sympathy with Israel's sorrow (Exod. iii. 7); His promise to save them, repeated again and again; and in due time that promise magnificently fulfilled in the chain of events we have rapidly surveyed, during which He showed Himself their Saviour from Pharaoh's bondage, their Saviour through the atonement, their Saviour at the Red Sea; and thereafter in the desert at Marah, as Jehovah their healer, as their bread and their water in their hours of hunger and thirst, and as Jehovah their banner, in the hard contest with their foes in the wilderness. Thus fully and beautifully was the redeeming love and saving grace of God manifested. Now comes the third revelation, as important in its place as either of the others, the revelation of His *holiness and justice*. It is the "holy, holy, holy, Lord God," who is revealed on Sinai.

Before we leave the thought of the order of these revelations, let us note the importance of observing it in our presentation of the truth, especially to our children. Let us, in fact, learn from God's dealing with His children, how to deal with ours. Begin with the fatherly care, go on to the redeeming love; and then, and not till then, seek to impress the holiness and justice, and the terror of His avenging law. Much injury has often been done to the tender hearts of little children by beginning with Sinai, and the terrors of the law—by giving them their first ideas of religion in the shape of threats of Divine vengeance, if they do not obey. With the hardened sinner it may be necessary to begin with the terrors of the law, in the hope of showing him his need of salvation from the wrath to come; but with

the comparatively innocent children, this course is apt to be exceedingly injurious. Let them know His fatherly care, His tender sympathy, His redeeming love—let them know these well and thoroughly, before you alarm them with the terrors of His avenging wrath.

The Divine holiness is so familiar a thought with us, enters so necessarily into all our conceptions of God, that it is difficult for us so realize its coming into the minds of men as something entirely new. But so it was. The heathen nations were destitute of the idea; and even the people of God had to be taught it for the first time at the period of the Exodus. The word "holy," as we have before remarked, does not occur in Genesis. The first introduction of it is at the burning bush: "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." We saw on that occasion, the close connection between the holiness and the love of God. That connection was not accidental. The Biblical idea of holiness is, throughout, associated with that of love and mercy;* and herein we see the appropriateness of that reference in the Red Sea song of salvation: "Who is like unto Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? . . . . Thou *in Thy mercy* hast led forth the people which Thou hast redeemed" (Exod. xv. 11–13). In fact, just as it is through "the apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ" that a sinner is led to true repentance, so the revelation of the Divine love is the path through which alone we can

* See Cremer's "Biblico-theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek," art. *ἁγιός*.

reach the knowledge of the Divine holiness. Hence the connection of the promise of mercy with the symbol of holiness at the burning bush; and hence the postponement of the full revelation of the Divine holiness till the consummation of Israel's redemption and the full manifestation of their God's redeeming love. The intelligent reader will at once recognise, that a very wide and most inviting field is opened here; but we can only point to the open gate, and pass on.

The place was most appropriate for the revelation. I shall attempt no description of the wild, desolate, rugged grandeur of Sinai. Enough to say, that all the surroundings were fitted to fill the soul with that awe which one feels in presence of the sublime in nature, and to produce the impression of separation from the world of man, and introduction into the presence of the Almighty Maker of all things. "Ye have seen," said God, "what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you *unto Myself*" (xix. 4). And then, besides, the people were specially prepared for an awe-inspiring revelation, by the regulations in prospect of the third day, when Jehovah should appear in sight of all the people (ver. 10–19). And when the solemn hour at last struck, the awe which the place itself inspired, and the reverence it had thus specially awakened in the people's hearts, were reinforced by the thrilling portents which attended the revelation: the thunders and lightnings; the thick cloud upon the mount, from whose dark interior there sounded out "the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud"; and then the quaking of the earth, as Jehovah descended in fiery grandeur upon the

mount (ver. 16–18). Could imagination possibly conceive any circumstances more fitted to impress the sentiment of holy reverence and awe in the presence of the Holy One of Israel?

Who can estimate what the world owes to these portents of Sinai, in the time when Israel was a child (Hosea xi. 1), and "heaven lay about him in his infancy." We are so much occupied with that majestic law, "the rugged grandeur of which towers above the greatest monuments of Egypt, like Sinai itself above the pyramids," that we forget the intrinsic value of those awful manifestations, which preceded its promulgation. But if we have the foundation of all ethics in the Decalogue, we have also, in the portents which preceded, the foundation of that reverence which is the soul of all true ethics, of those

"High instincts, before which our mortal nature
Did tremble like a guilty thing surprised!
. . . . . .
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us—cherish—and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal silence: truths that wake
To perish never!
Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
Nor man, nor boy,
Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
Can utterly abolish or destroy!" *

* Wordsworth, Ode on Intimations of Immortality, Derived from Recollections of Early Childhood.

Our reverence for nature, and our reverence for the God of nature, are both of Hebrew origin; and Sinai is their birthplace. Alas! that there should be so much in these times so utterly at enmity with human joy, as to encourage the attempt to abolish and destroy these, by cutting away their roots in that supernatural which is their only basis. But the God of Sinai still lives; and so long as He is acknowledged, reverence will still abide among men, in which, as Ruskin truly says, "is the chief joy and power of life."

And now we come to the Law itself (chap. xx.), in the forefront of which shine the Ten Words or Decalogue, distinguished from the rest of the law as spoken by God Himself "out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness," and then written on two tables of stone and delivered unto Moses (Deut. v. 22).

And here again, even here, in the Ten Words, grace is the foundation of all. There is a preface to the Decalogue. And what is that preface? It is the gospel of the grace of God: "I am Jehovah thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." One of the Rabbinical questions on this preface used to be: "Why did not Jehovah rather proclaim Himself as Lord of heaven and earth?" It is easy for us now, in the light of the New Testament, to answer the question which perplexed the Rabbis. It is not the greatness, but the goodness of God, and specially His redeeming love, that leads men to repentance (Rom. ii. 4), that inclines their hearts to obey all the words of this law.

Another general feature which distinguishes this law

from all heathen codes of morality, is its reference of everything to God. "I am Jehovah thy God," is the foundation of it all. (See also Lev. xix. 2, 18). Josephus discriminates correctly when he remarks, that whereas the heathen moralists made religion a part of virtue, Moses makes virtue a part of religion.* The only foundation for true humanity is sound divinity. The only perennial fountain of love to man is love to God, in whose image he is made.

The brevity, simplicity, and comprehensiveness of the Decalogue have often been remarked; its symmetrical arrangement too, with its two tables, of duty to God, and duty to man, while the fifth commandment forms the connecting link between, the relation of fatherhood and motherhood being the nearest earthly image of our common relation to our Father in Heaven. Then, the first table begins with the honouring of God in the heart, and proceeds through words to deeds; while the second table begins with conduct, forbidding the injury of our neighbour in person, in family, in property, and then proceeds through words to the thoughts of the heart again.

Objections have been made to the prevailing negative form, especially of the second table, to which the best answer seems to me to be the challenge: "Write you out a positive Decalogue, and see if you can improve on the old." Men have had more than thirty centuries to try it; but they have not succeeded yet! Besides, the negative form of the Decalogue appropriately confronts the positive tendency of man to sin; and on the other

* "Against Apion," ii. 17.

hand the true positive is found in the abounding grace of God. Let any redeemed soul honestly take this negative of the law, and faithfully keep it, and the Sun of righteousness will certainly print off its positive on the tablet of the heart, according to the promise in Exodus xix. 5, 6.

Many have found a difficulty in the reason appended to the second commandment; but it must be remembered in the first place, that the word "jealous" cannot be used in the same sense exactly when applied to God, as when it is applied to man. His jealousy is a holy jealousy. Purge human jealousy of all the evil connected with it, and it will give us the best idea of the Divine jealousy, a jealousy which is not selfish, as is usually the case with men, but concerned with the highest and best interests of those towards whom the emotion is felt. (See 2 Cor. xi. 2). Then as to the visiting of fathers' iniquities upon the children, we must bear in mind first, the unquestionable fact that children do suffer for the sins of their parents, and that it is of great importance to bring this to bear upon men's consciences to deter them from sin. Take the sin of drunkenness for instance—how the poor children of the inebriate suffer for no fault of theirs. Is it not to the credit of the Bible that it does not quietly ignore, as it might so easily have done, these hard facts which exist in nature and in providence, but boldly faces them and deals with them? But it must also be remembered, that so far as Divine visitation is concerned, it is only "unto the third and fourth generation of *them that hate*" God, so that though, as a natural consequence, the children suffer for their fathers'

sins, as a penal infliction they suffer only for their own. Furthermore, see how "mercy rejoices against judgment"; for while the judgment extends only to the third and fourth generation of those that hate, the mercy goes down to the thousandth generation of them that love God, for that is the true interpretation of the Hebrew, as is clearly seen even in the English of Deuteronomy vii. 9. Lastly, let a child of any generation, even of them that hate God, only repent, and he will not only not be punished for the sins of his fathers, but even his own sins will not be remembered at all against him. See on this whole subject, Ezekiel xviii.

"And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the mountain smoking, and heard the noise of the trumpet; and when the people saw it, they removed and stood afar off" (ver. 18). The natural effect of the law; its necessary effect when the conscience is truly alive. What then? Must they remain "afar off"? Now that God is revealed as holy, can they no longer know Him as their Father and Friend? Now that He has shown how far off He is, can they no longer come near? The chapters which follow, setting forth the covenant, supply the answer. This we must leave for separate consideration. Meantime we shall only look at the few verses following. There the way of the altar is pointed out. The people may come even to the "holy, holy, holy, Lord God," the same who has talked with them from heaven (ver. 22); not to any idol supposed to represent Him (ver. 23), but to Himself; only it must be with sacrifice (ver. 24); and when they come, they have this gracious promise to assure their hearts: "In all

places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee" (ver. 24). But He would have them come in the simplicity of confiding faith, and not with the notion so common in Egypt (of which the quotation from the hymn of Pentaur in the last lecture may serve as an illustration), that it will gain them the Divine favour to make a costly erection in His honour (ver. 25). There must be as little as possible of human display in the worship of God, for what after all is it but the display of nakedness (ver. 26); they must come, and we too must come, in utter simplicity, thinking only of Him who has said: "I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee."

There is a tradition current among the Jews that the law was given upon Mount Sinai on the fiftieth day from the date of the Exodus; and there seems not only no reason to doubt it, but every reason to accept it. Sinai then was the Pentecost of the old dispensation. And conversely, Pentecost is the Sinai of the new. Fifty days after the slaying of the paschal lamb there was the coming down of the Holy One upon the mount. Fifty days after "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us" the Holy Spirit descended on the Church met together on that mount of ordinances in the upper room. The inner relations of the two events will be clearly discerned by an examination of that passage in Jeremiah which is quoted with so much effect in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of

Egypt; which My covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord: but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts" (Jer. xxxi. 31–33). This, as we all know, is the work of the Holy Ghost. On the Pentecostal day of the old covenant, Jehovah came down from heaven to reveal Himself as the Holy One, and give His law to His redeemed people; on the Pentecostal day of the new covenant in like manner He descended in the person of the Holy Ghost, to write His law, "not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart"—the hearts of all who were redeemed by the blood of the Great Sacrifice which had been offered up on Calvary; and this seems to have been in the mind of the Apostle when he wrote: "The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. viii. 2). And just as the holy law was securely kept in the ark of the covenant within the holiest of all; so has the Holy Ghost remained in the midst of the true Church of Christ, according to the Saviour's promise. So too every true believer should have in his inmost heart a shrine for the Holy One, who comes to dwell in us in the blessed fulness of Pentecostal grace. Thus and thus only can we realize the fulfilment of those "great and precious promises," which were given of old to Israel, and of which we who believe in Christ are the true heirs; thus and thus only can we prove ourselves to be "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, to sho· forth the praises of Him who hath called us out of dai .ess into His marvellous light."

VII.

THE SINAI COVENANT.

EXODUS XX. 22—XXIV.

"THE Sinai Revelation" is a term which may be used with varying latitude of meaning. In its widest sense it will include the laws of Leviticus, which were given from the Tabernacle at the foot of the mountain, as well as all the laws of Exodus, which were given from the top of the mount. In its narrowest sense it may be restricted to the revelation of the 19th and 20th chapters, as distinguished from the remaining laws of Exodus, as well as from the whole body of the civil and ceremonial law. It is in this narrowest sense that we have used the term; so that we are justified in treating the Sinai covenant as a distinct subject. The distinction is clearly marked in Exodus by the separation of "the Ten Words" spoken by God Himself in the hearing of all the people, from the communications which were subsequently given through Moses. The 22d verse of the 20th chapter marks the transition. The distinction is still more strikingly indicated in the corresponding passage in Deuteronomy, where we read (Deut. v. 22): "These words the Lord spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: *and He added*

no more. And He wrote them in two tables of stone." It is true that the Decalogue formed part of the national covenant, as is evident both from Exodus xix. 5, and Deuteronomy v. 2. But it was more, far more. The national covenant was temporary, intended to last only so long as the nation lasted; while the revelation of the holy Lord, and His holy law, was more than national, it was catholic; it was not temporary, but eternal. And this distinction is most impressively brought out by the promulgation of the Decalogue in a voice which "shook the earth" (Heb. xii. 26), as if to say, "O earth, earth, earth, hear the voice of the Lord!" while the statutes and judgments of the civil and ceremonial law were simply delivered to Moses as the lawgiver of Israel. And the same distinction is apparent in the manner of recording, between the enduring tables of stone, and the more perishable "book of the covenant" (Exod. xxiv. 7). The distinction appears also in the 50th Psalm, in a very striking manner. The Psalm opens with a reference to the great universal revelation of the first day: "The mighty God, even the Lord, hath spoken and called *the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.*" Further on (ver. 5) He refers to the covenant: "gather *My saints* together unto Me; *those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.*"

"The Sinai covenant" might also be used in a wider sense, as including all the transactions between God and the people at Sinai; but we are dealing with it now in a narrower sense, as applied to the transaction recorded in Exodus xxiv., which stands only second in importance to that of the first day, when the Ten Words were spoken.

But before we consider the solemn inauguration of the covenant, we must glance at "the book of the covenant" which was its basis. This will take us over the intervening chapters. It has been a question whether the book of the covenant contained the Decalogue or not. I think it exceedingly likely that it did; and whether it did or not, there can be no question that it was understood to rest upon the tables of stone as its rock foundation. But "the book of the covenant," as distinguished from the tables of stone, begins with these words in the 22d verse of the 20th chapter: "Ye have seen that I have talked with you from heaven"; and extends to the close of the 23d chapter. It may be divided into four parts.

The first is a general outline of the mode of worship, especially guarding its purity and simplicity* (ver. 22–26). The outline was afterwards to be filled up in the elaborate ritual of the Tabernacle and its services; but in the book of the covenant there were only the leading principles which were to govern and guide the people in their acts of worship.

The next division contains "the judgments," as they are called, regulating the civil relations to each other of the members of the Hebrew commonwealth (xxi. 1–xxiii. 9). These judgments stood related to the second table of the law, just as the regulations concerning the worship of the altar stood related to the first. But it is a sad mistake to confound the two together, as those Rabbis did who quoted "an eye for an eye and a tooth

* See remarks on the passage in last lecture, pp. 87, 88.

for a tooth," as a justification for private revenge. The duty of the state to punish criminals is one thing; the duty of forgiving enemies in private life is another. And the two are quite compatible. It is to be remembered also that these "judgments," and those of the same kind which afterwards were added as occasion arose, are to be distinguished from the moral law, not only as applying to the state rather than to the individual, but also as local and temporary in their nature, representing not what was ideally best, but only what was then practically possible in the direction of that which was best. Some very superficial people criticise them as if they were intended for the nineteenth century! The Decalogue was, and is, intrinsically perfect; the "judgments" were adapted to the circumstances and wants of Israel at the time. And it would be a good thing if reformers of modern times would always remember the same wise and necessary distinction, between that which is ideally perfect and that which alone may be practically possible. Still further it is to be remembered, that these judgments were suitable to "the theocracy" of Israel; and hence those are entirely wrong who attempt to use them as precedents for general legislation in the limited monarchies and republican governments, and otherwise entirely altered circumstances, of modern times. If this had not been forgotten, the Church of the New Testament would have been saved the disgrace of many of those intolerant and persecuting laws for which support was most unjustifiably sought in the political regulations of the Hebrew commonwealth. On the other hand, if we could only com-

pare these "judgments" with the laws and customs of the nations around, we should see by force of contrast how exceedingly pure, wise, just, and humane they are; and especially where private relations are dealt with, we have touches which would not shame the New Testament itself, however much they may in another sense shame us, as for instance (Exod. xxiii. 4, 5): "If thou meet thy enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him."

The third division of the book of the covenant has to do with matters which relate neither to worship exclusively, nor to civil relations exclusively, but to both. These are the Sabbath year, the Sabbath day, and the yearly festivals (xxiii. 10–19). As for the Sabbath year and the festivals, they will come up again in the fuller details which were given from the Tabernacle and recorded in Leviticus. And as for the Sabbath day, we may simply remark the significance of its presence here in the book of the covenant, as well as in the Decalogue, indicating that while in its principle it belongs to universal and unchangeable law, in its letter it formed part of that national covenant which was merged in the new and better covenant of the later age.

The closing division of the book contains those promises which set forth the Divine part in the covenant,— promises of angelic guidance, victory, national prosperity and greatness, — accompanied, however, with cautions against disobedience, and against yielding to the temp-

tation of forsaking the God of Israel for the gods of the other nations which should be around them (ver. 20–23).

Such was the book of the covenant which Moses prepared under Divine direction; and now (xxiv. 1, 2) he and Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel are summoned into the Lord's presence as representatives of the people, for the solemn act of inauguration, to the consideration of which we now address ourselves.

The first thing Moses did was to make the people acquainted with the contents of the book so that they might know certainly what obligations they were about to assume. Whatever they did, they must do intelligently. Having secured in this way the assent of the people (ver. 3), the mediator of the covenant made the necessary preparations. After finishing the writing of the book, he erected an altar and twelve pillars. The altar represented the presence of God. The pillars represented the tribes of Israel (ver. 4). It is probable that the altar would be in the centre and the pillars ranged round it; and accordingly we have here the first outward representation of the Church. Here we have the idea of the Tabernacle, afterwards more fully developed in the Temple, and realized spiritually in the Church of Christ, the tabernacle or temple of the New Testament. The altar of sacrifice was in the centre then. It is in the centre still; for what else is the cross around which we all as Christians gather, than the altar of the New Testament, on which "Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us." It is in that central altar that the

different tribes of New Testament Christians all find their unity. And it is on the ground of the sacrifice which was offered there that all the promises of the covenant are given, one of the last of which runs thus: "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out" (Rev. iii. 12).

There was as yet no formally appointed priest in Israel. Moses himself, the mediator of the covenant, until special appointments were made, united in his own person all the different offices. So he employed young men to make the necessary preparations for offering sacrifice on the altar. These young men, under Moses' direction, "offered burnt offerings and sacrificed peace offerings" (ver. 5). The different kinds of offerings will come very fully before us when we reach Leviticus. Suffice it now to say that the burnt offerings belonged more exclusively to the altar, while the peace offerings were the people's. The two together represented the mutual relations of altar and pillars, of God and His people; the burnt offerings being the surrender of the people to God, the peace offerings symbolizing the bestowal of the Divine blessing upon the people.

We come now to the disposal of the blood of the sacrifice, that part of the ceremony which is specially referred to in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. ix. 18–20). Here we are told that the blood was sprinkled on the altar and on the people. In Hebrews we are told that Moses sprinkled both the book and the people. Probably then the book was laid upon the altar, so that both the altar itself, and the book upon it, would be sprinkled with the blood. And though the people are

spoken of both here and in Hebrews, it is quite probable that it was the pillars as representing the people that were sprinkled; though there may have been, in order to make the meaning plainer still, a sprinkling of the blood in the direction of the people themselves.

Let us now examine as carefully as we can the significance of this blood sprinkling. There is first the general truth taught in the Epistle to the Hebrews: "neither was the first covenant dedicated without blood." Yes, even in that national, temporary covenant, which had so much to say about works, with blessings promised to obedience and curses denounced for disobedience, that covenant which many regard as wholly legal, even *that* covenant is founded on the grace of God as represented by the altar and the sacrifice and the sprinkling of the blood. Thus, throughout the Old Testament as well as throughout the New, grace is ever at the foundation, and works are built upon it; the Gospel is the substructure, law is the superstructure. But besides this general truth, observe how carefully the order of the service is marked. Let us look at it. First, the blood is divided into two portions, one of which is set aside to be used in sprinkling the people. Then Moses proceeds in the order following: (1) Sprinkling of the altar (ver. 6); (2) reading the book of the covenant to the people and securing their assent (ver. 7); (3) sprinkling the people (ver. 8). The significance of this order will be readily seen. As soon as the sacrifice is offered the altar is sprinkled. The altar is the meeting-place between God and His people, as is declared in the first part of the book of the covenant itself (Exod. xx. 24).

But God and the sinner cannot meet except on the ground of atonement, and so the altar must be sprinkled with the atoning blood of the sacrifice. As soon as the altar is sprinkled with the atoning blood, the people may meet with God, and receive His blessing there. But they too must be sprinkled with the blood. On what condition? On condition that they turn their backs on their old sins, and set their faces to the keeping of the holy covenant. Hence the next thing after the sprinkling of the altar, and before the sprinkling of the people, is to ask their solemn assent to the covenant. And as soon as that assent is given, as soon as the people's will is surrendered to the Lord, the blood of the sacrifice is sprinkled, reconciliation is made, and the covenant embraces them in its blessed bond. And now we can see very clearly what was in the Apostle Peter's mind when he speaks of believers as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, (this carries us back to the early promises before the work of redemption from bondage began) through sanctification of the Spirit, (this leads us to think of the Pentecostal day at Sinai, with its revelation of the holy Lord, and His holy law) *unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*" (here we think of the ratification of the covenant, when the sprinkling of the blood followed the declaration of obedience). It will be observed, of course, that the obedience is not the obedience of fact, which follows the blood sprinkling, but the obedience of heart and will, which must precede it. The sinner who comes to be sprinkled with the blood of the sacrifice may come singing,

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me";

but the very fact that he comes with these words on his lips proves that already he has that obedience of the heart and will, that saying of "I come," which is the necessary antecedent even of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. When the great sacrifice was offered up on Calvary, the altar was sprinkled once for all; but it is necessary that we should be sprinkled with the same blood (ver. 6) that we may become the people of God; and all that is required in order to this is just the assent of the heart, the surrender of the will to Him, the word "O Lamb of God, I come," which carries with it the old declaration of which that altar and these pillars were the witness: "All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient."

Before we leave this most suggestive service, consider how significant it is that the book is laid upon the altar and sprinkled with the blood. There is a sense in which we are saved by works, as the Apostle James so fully testifies. But what kind of works are they? Works laid upon the altar and sprinkled with blood. These are the kind of works James speaks of; very different indeed from "the works of the law," which the Apostle Paul proves again and again to have no justifying power. Good works have their place in salvation, their necessary place, for they are indispensable. But that place is on the altar. And even after they are laid there, they need to be sprinkled with the blood of the atoning sacrifice.

And now that the transaction is complete, the results

appear: "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel: and they saw the God of Israel" (ver. 9, 10). And not only did they see Him; they did eat and drink in His presence (ver. 11) without fear. These "nobles of the children of Israel" were evidently Israel's representatives, and their feast in the sacred presence represented the sacred and blessed nearness of all the people, the saints who by sacrifice have made a covenant with God (Ps. l. 5), the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God"; and, far from trembling, they shall feast in His presence, "rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

There is something sublime and significant in the restrained and reverent way in which the glory of the Lord is referred to. No attempt to describe the vision itself, nothing which could supply even to the imagination the materials for the construction of any likeness of the Almighty. Simply a suggestion, chaste and yet glowing, of the glory "*under His feet*." Ah, that is all the sinful eye of man can see, even under the most favoured conditions here on earth. But then may we not well argue that, if what is under His feet suggests pavement of sapphire and heaven's clearest ethereal blue—if all that is most rapturously beautiful in nature be only the tinting of His footstool—what, oh what shall be the glory of His face, when we "shall see Him as He is," and "be like Him" too; for the time is coming when, by the side of the "pure river of the water of

life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb," they who now only serve and wait upon the footstool, "shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads; and there shall be no night there!"

But a greater privilege than that of seeing God upon the mountain is yet in store. To go up and see God on the mountain is good; but to have Him come down and dwell with us in the plain is better. To feast in the Divine presence, on a great and special occasion, was a privilege indeed; but it is better still to have the Divine presence on all occasions, from day to day, from hour to hour continually. And it is to prepare the way for this inestimable blessing that Moses is now called up alone into the immediate presence of the Lord, there to abide for many days, during which he will receive the Tabernacle revelation, the substance of which was this: "Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (xxv. 8). The great importance and inestimable value of the new revelation is betokened by the glory prelude of six days which preceded it (xxiv. 16), and the length of time that was occupied in conveying it, the whole amounting to forty days and forty nights (ver. 18).

This new and important revelation we must leave for separate study. But before we pass from the covenant of which it was the consummation, let us notice the three stages of privilege, as we may call them, which the covenant people are permitted to enjoy, all of them represented within the compass of the chapters before

us. Leave Moses out of consideration for the time. His position was unique. He was the mediator of the covenant, and in this respect a type of Christ Himself, and accordingly he is at all times admitted into the closest relations with the God of Israel. But taking the representatives of the people, we find them first (ver. 1) permitted to worship afar off, as if God were in highest heaven, and they far below upon the earth. That is the first stage: "O Thou who dwellest in the heavens, we lift our eyes to Thee."

At that time the sacrifice was only in contemplation. But after it had been offered and the blood sprinkled on the altar and on the people, the representatives of the people were permitted to draw near, by ascending the mount, where "they saw the God of Israel" (ver. 9–11). That is the second stage: "Ye who were afar off, are brought nigh by the blood of Christ."

But this is not the consummation yet. The mediator ascends into the mount, where a cloud of glory receives him out of sight of the people below (ver. 15); and after forty days again the heavens open, and lo, "the tabernacle of God is with men." He comes to dwell in the midst of them. This is the third and best stage of all, for now He comes to abide with His people for ever (see John xiv. 16).

I need scarcely say that this is just the order of Christian experience: First "the upward glancing of the eye" to heaven, the worship of the publican standing afar off, crying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Then there is the approach to the altar, coming to the cross, and as

the result, conscious nearness to God and joy in His presence. But the experience is not complete till from the open heaven there comes the blessed Comforter to make His abode in the believer's heart. Thus it is that, to the earnest seeker, God reveals Himself as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and at each successive stage comes nearer, till the sacred union is complete.

VIII.

THE TABERNACLE REVELATION.

EXODUS XXV.–XXXI.

THE first thing to settle in our minds is the relation of this to the earlier Sinai revelation. The earlier one we have called *the* Sinai revelation for reasons already given ; but this later one belongs to Sinai also, for it, too, was given from the sacred mount. And though its accompaniments were not so tremendous and awe-inspiring as those which attended the earlier one, they were sufficiently solemn to arrest and fix the attention, as we saw at the close of last lecture (Exod. xxiv. 16–18). The first question before us then is, as to the relation of the Tabernacle to the Law.

I. The later revelation was the complement of the earlier. The former taught how very far off Jehovah was in His holiness ; the latter teaches how very near He is ready to come in His love. Then the word of command was: "Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death" (Exod. xix. 12). But now that the people have come to the altar with the appointed sacrifice, and have promised obedience, and been sprinkled with the blood of the offering, the time has come for a new revelation, the

revelation of Love and Mercy. And now the word of command is: "Let them prepare Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them" (Exod. xxv. 8). Yet the later revelation is not at all inconsistent with the former; for though He who formerly warned the people off, now offers to come and dwell among them, the offer is made in such a way as not at all to compromise His holiness: "Let them make Me a *sanctuary* (a holy place), and I will dwell among them." Thus while love is the prominent feature of the new revelation, holiness is not lost sight of; just as in the former, while holiness was prominent, love was by no means absent, as we found when we had it before us. "Mercy and truth meet together; righteousness and peace embrace each other" in both.

II. The latter really includes the earlier; for the tables of stone are to be deposited, as we shall see, in the ark of the covenant within the holy of holies, the innermost shrine of the Tabernacle. Thus the Law held the central position in the new revelation. And not only is the holy Law its centre, but its end; not merely in a literal sense (Exod. xxxi. 18), but in this regard, that all the sacrifices and ceremonies, symbols and types of the Tabernacle service, were but the means to the attainment of that "holiness, without which no man can see the Lord." Only those who are profoundly ignorant of the Old Testament can represent the ceremonial law as a thing of form only, savouring more of superstition than of sanctity. Those who are at all intelligent in the reading of the Law cannot fail to perceive that every part of it is directed towards the supreme end of holiness, which is kept in view from the

very beginning: "If ye will obey My voice, and keep My covenant, then ye shall be a . . . . holy nation" (Exod. xix. 5, 6). The religion of the Bible is a character religion throughout. "God hath called us unto holiness"—through form, through faith, through Moses, through Christ; but always *to* holiness. "Be ye holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." This is the kernel of the Old Testament. It is also the core of the New.

III. The later revelation had an element of permanence in it, which the former had not. The Lord *appeared* upon Mount Sinai, but He *dwelt* in the Tabernacle. The one was a solemn memory; the other a delightful ever-present experience. The people soon left Mount Sinai; but they carried the Tabernacle with them wherever they went. Judgment is the Lord's "strange work," but "He delighteth in mercy." There must be conviction of sin to begin with, but the abiding characteristic of true Christian experience is the presence of the Lord consciously and happily realized. His people need not remain trembling before Sinai. Only let them make Him a sanctuary, and He will dwell with them, and His presence will banish fear. The Comforter will "abide with you for ever." True, Sinai must not be forgotten; the tables of stone are carried wherever the sanctuary goes, but they are covered with the mercy-seat; and above, ever open to view, is the symbol of the gracious loving presence of the Lord.

So much for the relation of the Tabernacle to the revelation of law which it so closely follows. And now let us look at the Tabernacle revelation itself. And here we must of necessity restrict ourselves to its most gen-

eral features. To study it in detail would require a course of separate lectures. It was in substance a revelation of God's willingness to dwell with His people, and of the conditions on which this great blessing could be realized by them. The first condition is their willingness to welcome Him when He comes. And accordingly the first step is to give the people an opportunity of showing this willingness. "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they bring Me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take My offering . . . . and let them make Me a sanctuary" (xxv. 1–8). The giving of the revelation shows the willingness on God's part; the offerings of the people the willingness on theirs.

And now the question comes, how can it be? "Will God in very deed dwell with man upon the earth?" Is there any way by which the Holy One can dwell in the midst of an unholy people? The elaborate details of the Tabernacle and its service was the answer in symbol to this great question. If the willingness of the people had been all that was necessary, they might have been left to construct the Tabernacle as they thought best. But it is not so easy for the holy God and sinful man to meet and dwell together. Obstacles must be removed, a way must be opened, barriers must be thrown down. Hence the necessity for constructing the Tabernacle and arranging its services in such a way as to convey in the language of symbol how all this is to be done. "According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it" (ver. 9).

And now as we are about to enter upon the symbolism of the Tabernacle, it may be well to pause a moment and consider how appropriate it was that the truth should be conveyed in this way, the more especially as there are prevalent, even among intelligent persons, many unreasonable objections to this form of revelation. Consider first the much deeper impression made by that which is addressed to the eye than by what is addressed to the ear. Even a single *exhibition* of truth is more impressive than a declaration of it; how much more a perpetual one. There was the truth vividly painted before the people's eyes from day to day, from year to year, from age to age. And if any one suggests that the same result could have been obtained by the written characters of ordinary language, let him ask first, how copies enough could have been multiplied; and next and more particularly, how many of the people in these early times, and in the infancy of the nation, could read and understand written characters. And very little reflection will show, not only that a series of pictures was much better for the education of the people than a string of propositions could have been, but that the pictorial method, the method of symbol, was the only one which met the necessities of the case.

Seeing then that a symbolic exhibition of the truth was called for, the question arises whether the symbols employed should be new or old. A moment's consideration will decide the question; for manifestly the more familiar the symbols were to the people, the better would they be adapted for conveying ideas to their minds. And yet great objections have been taken on the ground

that the symbolic language of the Tabernacle is found to be Egyptian in its origin! Of course it was. Had not these people been in Egypt all their lives? Where else then could familiar illustrations be found than in Egypt? If new symbols had been invented, entirely apart from all their old Egyptian associations, a special miracle would have been necessary to enable them to understand the new language. These objectors have not the common sense to distinguish between ideas and the language in which they are expressed, between thoughts and words, between things and the signs that represent them. On the same principle there should be exception taken to the use of the Greek language in the New Testament, for is not every word in it a symbol of Greek origin? The language of the New Testament is Greek; but the thoughts are far beyond anything the Greek mind ever conceived; and in the same way, though the language of the Tabernacle is Egyptian, the truth conveyed by its symbolic language is far above anything that ever entered the mind of old Egypt. And if any one says it was unworthy of God to make use of symbols that had been stained by their connection with Egyptian idolatry and wickedness, is it not manifest that the same objection lies against all language? Take the grandest sentence in the New Testament as an illustration: "God is Love." Think what abominations were connected with that word Love in its Greek associations; but what else could the writers of the New Testament do than take the old familiar though degraded word, and convert it, so to speak, baptizing it in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, so as to make

it a fitting symbol for the queen of all the heavenly graces, and even a fitting term to designate the nature of God Himself. Suppose the Apostle Paul had said: "That word has been so defiled by contact with sin that we cannot use it. Let us invent a new one." Who would have understood the new word? He would have had it all to himself. And even the Greek Θεὸς itself, had it not been applied to Zeus and to Dionysos, and all the gods of the Greek Pantheon, some of them monsters of depravity? And yet it is the only word which can be used to designate the One living and true God. Why? Simply because when language of any kind is used, it must be such as the people to whom it is addressed can understand. And so, instead of finding any difficulty in the acknowledged Egyptian origin of these symbols, it is the very thing we must expect; and herein we have another evidence of the genuineness and antiquity of the Pentateuch. The close connection between the symbolic language of the Tabernacle and the symbolism of Egypt under the Pharaohs, shows that the Tabernacle revelation must have been given immediately after the Exodus, and could not have come through more likely hands than his, "who was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians." It is, in fact, an evidence of date of the same kind as the use of Hellenistic Greek in the New Testament.

Still another objection must be considered before leaving the form of the Tabernacle revelation, the objection founded on the supposed difficulty of understanding the symbols. Now it is true that the Western mind needs some training in order readily to understand Oriental

symbolism. But is this to be wondered at? Our familiarity with the abstractions of a highly-developed language, unfits us for readily comprehending the simple and primitive language of signs. It is not our mother-tongue: but it was theirs. For the same reason that even the little children in France speak French, which may excite the wonder of a very ignorant person, these children of Israel would understand in a moment many things which we need to investigate before we understand. The Tabernacle revelation then was quite comprehensible to those to whom it was first addressed; and it is quite comprehensible to us too, if we will only apply ourselves to the study of it. The symbols used are largely natural, as, for instance, the use of white for purity, gold for value, etc.; and so far as they are artificial, the key may be found somewhere in the Scriptures. And even the oldest among us and most accustomed to dealing with abstract truth, will find it of advantage to study these old object lessons, these pictorial illustrations of Divine truth, for our own instruction and edification.

Inasmuch as the Tabernacle was "the tent of meeting"* between God and man, there were two sides of truth expressed in its symbols, the Divine side and the human side, the one showing with what rich liberality God comes to meet man, the other showing with what holy carefulness man must draw near to God. Sometimes the same symbol will have truth to tell on both

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* This is the proper rendering, and not as in our version, "tabernacle of the congregation." See Exod. xxix. 42, 43.

sides, as, for instance, the table of shewbread, which, in one aspect, represents the rich provision God makes for His people in His house: and in another, the fruits of righteousness which His people must present to Him. But when we bear in mind that even when we give to the Lord, it is always of His own we give to Him, there will be no confusion in the twofold application of such symbols, and our minds will readily take hold of that side of the truth which is germane to the general subject under consideration.

The order of the symbols is different in the chapters before us from that which we find in the later part of the book (xxxv.–xl.) when the Tabernacle was actually made. And a careful consideration of the two arrangements would suggest that, while the latter was the order in which the work was actually done, the former is the order which has greater significance in regard to the truth to be unfolded. Hence the special value of the chapters before us for getting a correct view of the most general features of the Tabernacle revelation. To this task we now address ourselves. And here we shall find three leading thoughts.

The first is the central position of the Law. "They shall make Me an ark, ... and shall put into it the testimony" (xxv. 10–16). Why is the enshrining of the law the first thing? Is it on the ground of the law that God and man are to meet? Evidently not, for while the tables of stone are to be placed in the ark, they are to be covered with the mercy-seat, and *there* it is (ver. 22) that the meeting between God and man must be. What then is meant by the prominent place given to

the law? Is it not this, that while one cannot draw near to God except through mercy which forgives the transgression of the law, yet he may and *must* come with an earnest desire and purpose to keep the law. He may come without any righteousness of his own, but not without "hunger and thirst" after righteousness, not without that spirit which will lead him to put the law of God in the most sacred place, and surround it with proofs of highest appreciation, as suggested in these directions: "Thou shalt overlay it with pure gold, within and without shalt thou overlay it, and shalt make upon it a crown of gold round about" (ver 11).

Observe carefully that the tables of stone are not at the threshold; they are in the inmost shrine. If they had been at the threshold, the thought would have been: "keep the law, and you will have the privilege of meeting with God." But being in the inmost shrine, the very last thing that one would reach who entered by the door, the thought is not, "keep the law and God will let you in"; but, "come in and God will give you grace to keep the law." Grace first, goodness afterwards, as always. And yet, though last in one sense, it is first in another, for it is the goal towards which every step of the worshipper is directed; and the first thing a runner must do is to fix his eye upon the goal. Thus the law is the first for the eyes and the last for the feet; the first as an object of desire, the last as an object of attainment. Even a sinner may make a gold casket and a golden crown for the law (how many are there, for instance, that can crown with their admiration the Sermon

on the Mount, who are very far from keeping it); but if he would learn to keep it perfectly, he must betake himself to the mercy-seat in the appointed way, and avail himself of the rich provision which God has for him in His house.

Thus we reach the second leading thought of the Tabernacle revelation: the rich provision God has for those who come before Him, hungering and thirsting after righteousness. This is set forth very delightfully in the next four items.

The first is the mercy-seat (ver. 17–21). "Mercy to pardon" is the first thing. While the law is the end on which the eye must be ever fixed, mercy is the path that the feet must tread to reach the goal.

The next is a table on which there is a perpetual supply of bread (ver. 23–30). The best commentary on this part of the Tabernacle revelation are our Lord's own words concerning the "bread of life," with which God supplies the wants of those who come to the mercy-seat, who believe on His Son (John vi.)

After the table comes the lamp (ver. 31–40). After life, comes light. And again, the best commentary is to be found in the 8th and 9th chapters of the same Gospel, where we have our Lord's own teaching concerning the light provided for the world in the Father's house, of which the light provided for Israel in the Tabernacle was a feeble type. "In Him was life; and the life was the light of men."

Then there is a place in the Father's house (chap. xxvi.) This chapter gives directions for the Tabernacle itself, its external walls, with its curtains and divisions.

There are here many details of special interest, but we can only refer to the general idea, which is quite apparent. The walls were made of forty-eight standing boards or pillars. Here we have the same idea as in the twenty-fourth chapter, where the twelve pillars were erected around a central altar, the pillars representing the tribes. More than twelve are needed now to enclose the entire space and make a continuous wall, but the significant number is still retained by taking a convenient multiple, four times twelve. Thus the very construction of the Tabernacle or tent of meeting symbolized the union of God and His people, and the privilege which they enjoyed of being pillars in His house. It will of course be at once perceived that we have only for the boards of the Tabernacle to put the stones of the Temple, in order to trace the development of that familiar image which appears so often in the New Testament in forms like this: "To whom coming, as unto a living stone . . . . ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house" (1 Pet. ii. 4, 5). This fourfold blessing is the second of the three leading thoughts.

The third and last is the way in which the people are to come when they draw near to God. They must come by the way of the *altar* (chap. xxvii.) which is to be erected in the outer court—through a *priesthood* (xxviii.), who are to be consecrated for the purpose—and with the appointed *sacrifices* (xxix.) Here again, the details are full of interest; and the space given to this whole subject, covering these three long chapters, indicates its vast importance; but as we shall have it fully before us in our future study, especially in the book of Leviticus, we

do not dwell upon it now. All we notice at present is, that however necessary the desire to keep the law, and however free the mercy-seat with all its sacred accompaniments of blessing, there could be no approach to the inner shrine without an altar, a priest, and a sacrifice —all according to the Divine appointment. There must be not only longing for future holiness in the people's hearts, but also atonement for past sin on their behalf, before the hallowed meeting can take place. But as soon as the appointed priest has offered the appointed sacrifice upon the appointed altar on Israel's behalf, the obstacle is removed and the promise can be fulfilled (xxix. 43, 46).

And yet this is not all. There is also the incense, and the laver, and the holy anointing oil (xxx.) The significance of these symbols is very clear. "Let my *prayer* come before Thee as incense,"—the fragrant breath of the new life which has just been kindled at the altar. The laver provides that *washing* from daily stains which even those need who have been already purged, by the blood of the atoning sacrifice, from the guilt and condemnation of sin (see John xiii. 10 compared with Exod. xxx. 19). Then the holy anointing oil, compounded of its rare, costly, and fragrant ingredients, evidently represents the positive *graces* of the Christian character, which will exhale from the renewed life of those who have come to God by the way of the altar and the laver without, and the golden altar within.

And now do we not see how suggestive of important truth is the very order in which these details were given to Moses at the first? Those who look more at the letter than the spirit have found a difficulty in what seemed

to them the strange arrangement, beginning first with the inner apartment, then taking a portion of the furniture of the outer apartment, then giving directions for the walls and the curtains, afterwards taking the altar in the court, and thereafter coming back again to the altar of incense within, and once more going out to the court again where the laver stood, and finishing with so small a matter as the anointing oil. It seemed all confusion. And so it is from the point of view of a carpenter or builder. But when we look at it, not in a mechanical, but in a spiritual point of view, we see a singular beauty in the order, each part leading on to the next in the gradual unfolding of the great truths which were infolded in the Tabernacle revelation.

And after Bezaleel, and Aholiab, and their assistants have been called to the work (xxxi. 1–12), the entire revelation appropriately concludes with a re-enactment of the Sabbath law in a new aspect as a sign (ver. 12–17). "It is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations" (ver. 13). "It is a sign between Me and the children of Israel for ever." And was it not so? And is not the same sign as decisive as ever? Tell me how a Christian spends the first day of the week, and I will tell you what a kind of a Christian he is. If any man really remembers God's day to keep it holy, he is not likely to forget the need of the altar, the priest, and the sacrifice, or any of the important elements of a Christian life. But if you disregard the Lord's day and allow its sacred opportunities to pass without improvement, it is too evident that you are letting all these things slip from you. The keeping of the Lord's day is a sign between you and Him.

IX.

LAPSE AND RESTORATION.

EXODUS XXXII.–XXXIX.

THE twofold revelation from Mount Sinai is now completed, and nothing remains but to carry it into effect; and accordingly Moses is about to descend to make the necessary preparations for receiving the Holy One who has promised to come and dwell in the midst of Israel.

But, alas! instead of an expectant people, eager to welcome the new revelation from the mountain top, and ready to do all that is asked of them, the disappointed leader finds Israel in open rebellion, gathered round a golden image—worshipping a calf! Here is an obstacle that threatens to ruin all.

Some have difficulty in realizing the possibility of such a lapse in so short a time. But the difficulty arises chiefly from a misapprehension of the nature of the offence. It was not apostasy in the most aggravated sense. It was not the substitution of a calf for the God of Sinai. The calf was intended, not as a substitute, but as a symbol of Jehovah, as is evident from Aaron's proclamation, "to-morrow is a *feast to the Lord*" (ver. 5). The plural form in ver. 4, "These be thy gods," is mis-

leading, suggesting as it does that they had abandoned the one God of Israel for the many gods of the heathen. It only needs to be remembered that the plural form of the word is regularly applied to God, as the plural of excellence (a familiar idiom of the Hebrew language), to see that Aaron meant through the calf as a symbol to direct the thoughts of the people to their unseen God: "This is thy God, O Israel, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." It was in fact a breach, not of the first, but of the second commandment. This was bad enough, especially in view of the explicitness and emphasis of the terms in which the commandment was couched; but it no longer is impossible to see how they could have fallen into the sin. Egyptian influences and associations must still have had a very strong hold upon them; and forty days was a long time to wait without any visible sign or token. This is manifestly no excuse, but it helps us to understand how the people were tempted to try the virtue of the Egyptian Apis worship, with which they had all been familiar from their infancy. As for Aaron's part in it, it seems to be most easily explained on the supposition that while in his heart he utterly disapproved, he had not courage to resist the popular demand, and so, timidly complied. This is Aaron's own account of the matter at all events (ver. 22), and we ought in charity to accept it. But after all, why should we be so very much astonished at the iniquity and folly of the children of Israel, when we are so familiar with a sin sadly prevalent among ourselves, so similar to theirs that it can be plainly indicated in the very words of Moses on this occasion: "Oh, this

people have sinned a great sin, and have made them a God—of Gold!"

It is worthy of remark that Josephus, the Jewish historian, omits all reference to this disgraceful lapse.* This proves on the one hand that, trustworthy as Josephus is in the main, he does not hesitate to omit important facts when they do not suit his purpose; and therefore we need not at all wonder at those omissions of important facts in the time of our Lord, which it did not suit him to record, nor be moved by the infidel objections which have nothing else than these omissions to rest upon. And on the other hand we have an incidental confirmation of the genuineness of the Pentateuch, in that we find so faithfully recorded, events that an uninspired historian would have been tempted to omit or to slur over.

"And it came to pass, as soon as he came nigh unto the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, that Moses' anger waxed hot, and he cast the tables out of his hands and brake them beneath the mount." This was evidently no "loss of temper," but righteous indignation; and the breaking of the tables was a solemn token that the covenant was broken and all its blessings forfeited. The grinding down of the calf, and mixing it with the water the people had to drink, showed his contempt for their idol, and taught them that they must "eat of the fruit of their own ways and be filled with their own devices." And the slaying of the three thousand completed the lesson, by showing that loss of blessing, and the punishment which sin brings with it, do not exhaust

* See Antiq., III. v. 7.

the penalty of such wickedness, but that positive infliction of the severest kind must follow. In all sin there is great loss; besides this, every sin brings its own punishment with it; and yet this is not all, for "the soul that sinneth it must die." A solemn and most memorable lesson for these times, in which it has become the fashion to treat sin as if it were of little consequence, and to commend those who "heal the hurt of it slightly, saying, 'peace, peace,' when there is no peace."

There are those who raise an outcry against what they call the cruelty of this infliction. But consider first, that it was a case of high-handed rebellion of an entire people; and how few great rebellions in history have been quelled with so slight a loss. Consider next that an opportunity was given to all to repent, by the call, "who is on the Lord's side?" There was no reason, save their obstinacy in sin, why any one should continue in rebellion after that call. Consider lastly, that no hurt was done to those who chose to remain quietly in their tents. Those who were on the Lord's side were to go "from gate to gate throughout the camp," and though they were not to spare any on the ground of acquaintanceship or kinship, it is very certain that only those who had hardened their hearts against the Lord would fall victims to the avenging sword of the Levite.

And now what is the condition of affairs? Is there any hope for the future? The tables are broken. The Tabernacle revelation is set aside. And it would seem as if the only way now of fulfilling the promise made of old to Abraham, is to destroy the people and choose Moses—

"Among the faithless, faithful only he,"

as a new head of a great nation (see ver. 10). But though the people have forfeited all claim to the fulfilment of the promise, "the mercy of the Lord endureth" still, and the resources of His grace are unexhausted. Moses himself steps in as mediator of the covenant, and through his mediation a free pardon is obtained, and the covenant renewed. The whole transaction is so striking and so significant, as well as so beautifully illustrative of the exalted character of Moses, that we must dwell on it a little.

In Galatians iii. 19, we read that the law "was ordained of angels *in the hand of a mediator*." The mediatorial work of Moses really began when the people in fear exclaimed, "let not God speak with us, lest we die." "Go thou near and hear all that the Lord our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee" (Exod. xx. 19; Deut. v. 27). But it reaches its culmination in the scenes recorded in the chapter before us; and accordingly this is the best time to consider the subject of his mediatorship.

As we do so, it will be well to keep in mind the comparison with the Lord Jesus, as Mediator of the new covenant, to which we are invited again and again in the Epistle to the Hebrews (see Heb. viii. 6; iii. 1, 2). In the latter passage the mediatorial work is divided into its two parts: "Consider the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, who was faithful, as Moses was." A mediator is one who comes between God and man. He may come from God to man, thus acting for God in the presence of man. Or he may go from man to God, thus acting for man in the presence of God. The former is

the work of the Apostle. The latter is the work of the High-Priest. When Christ came from heaven to earth He came as an Apostle. When He returned to His Father through the gate of suffering and death, He went as "the High Priest of our profession." So in the same way, when Moses came down from Mount Sinai bearing the message of God to the people, he was the apostle. When he went into the presence of God to intercede on Israel's behalf, he was the high-priest of the old covenant. For we must remember that as yet no separate appointment of a priesthood had been made. Moses still united in his own person all the different offices, which seems to be the meaning in the passage of the Epistle we have been quoting, which speaks of Moses as "faithful *in all his house*." Aaron was among the sinners at this time, of whom indeed he was chief. Moses was the priest, who went up to the mount on his behalf and on behalf of all the people, to procure a pardon for them, and a renewal of those blessings which they had lost by their fall.

Now observe the different stages in his mediatorial work as intercessor. His intercession begins before he leaves the mount to come down among the people. There, in the heavenly place, he learns of the people's sin, and though a way is open to him of getting rid of his troublesome charge, and securing for himself all the blessings which had been intended for them, he does not think of it for one moment, but pours out his heart in earnest entreaty in behalf of the people, reminding the Lord of His mercy to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and His promise to their seed, and of the occasion for boast-

ing which would be given to the Egyptians and all the enemies of God and His people when they should hear of their destruction in the wilderness (ver. 11–13). Observe that he does not offer any excuse for the people, or any extenuation of their sin. Nor does he make any promises on their behalf for the future. He casts himself simply on the Divine mercy and grace, and keeps his eye fixed on the Divine glory. A perfect model of intercession. And here it is beautiful to contrast his tenderness in the presence of God with his courage and uncompromising severity in presence of the people. A weak man would have expressed indignation in presence of the offended party, and said as little as possible in presence of the offenders. But Moses, true type of the great Intercessor as he was, was all tenderness towards the people in presence of their offended Lord; and at the same time all faithfulness to his Lord in presence of the offending people. The Lord Jesus came down to earth with just as much tenderness in His heart, and yet He could as sternly denounce the scribes and Pharisees of His day, as Moses did the leaders of the apostasy, when he came down from the mount where he had been pleading so earnestly on their behalf.

Look now at the second stage of the intercession. Having done everything that was necessary to convince the people of their sin and lead them to repentance, he goes back again to the mount, saying to the people: "Ye have sinned a great sin; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin" (ver. 30). And when he goes, he shows his readiness to lay down his life for them: "Yet now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin—; and

if not, blot me, I pray Thee, out of Thy book which Thou hast written." This is, we believe, the very nearest that any mortal man has ever come to the sublime self-sacrifice of the High-Priest of our profession, who went back to His Father resolved (without the "peradventure") to make an atonement for His people's sin; who not only showed His willingness to sacrifice His life, but actually did sacrifice it for them.*

There is still a third stage in the intercession of Moses. So far, the forgiveness and restoration are only partial. The promise which had been made in the book of the covenant (xxiii. 23) is renewed (xxxiii. 2); but the Tabernacle revelation is withdrawn. An angel is to go before them. But God will not now dwell among them. This explains verse 4: "When the people heard these *evil* tidings, they mourned." It was not, of course, that the going of the angel before them was "evil tidings," but that that was all. An angel before them was good, but it was a poor substitute for God in the midst of them.

What, then, does Moses do? "He took the tent† (to

* It will be seen from this that we do not suppose the book of life to mean the book of eternal life. We understand it rather as a reference to the custom of keeping a register of the inhabitants of the place, from which the names of those who die are removed. It is his readiness to die for the people, and not to be lost for ever, that we are to understand. And yet we must remember that there is no necessity for settling definitely what was in the mind of Moses when he used the expression. It was no matter of calculation as to how much he was willing to suffer or to lose. He simply felt as if he would *suffer anything, lose all*, rather than that the people should be cut off.

† Much unnecessary difficulty has been made here by the use of the word "tabernacle," when manifestly the Tabernacle was not in existence. But it is not the technical word for the tabernacle that is

which the people had been wont to resort when they had any matter to bring before him), and pitched it without the camp, afar off from the camp, and called it the tent of meeting" (ver. 7). Had it not been for the people's sin, they might have had the Tabernacle which the Lord had described, made and set up in the midst of them; but now that could not be. But though the Lord cannot come into the midst of them now, may it not be possible to give an opportunity to those who are thoroughly repentant, of showing their repentance, by leaving the scene of their sin and going afar off without the camp to meet the Lord? This, we believe, was the idea in Moses' mind when he took this tent and called it (evidently showing that it had not been so regarded before) the tent of meeting. And accordingly we read that "it came to pass that every one which sought the Lord, went out unto the tent of meeting which was without the camp" (ver. 7, close). The deep interest which the people took is further manifested by the eagerness with which their eyes followed Moses, and their reverent attitude at the time he entered into the tent (ver. 8); and we can well imagine what a comfort it would be to observe the token of approval which the Lord at once so kindly gave by the descent of the cloud pillar to the

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here used; it is the common word for "tent." Therefore it seems quite natural to suppose that it was the tent of head-quarters, so to speak; not Moses' own private tent, but the one to which the people were wont to repair when they had any matter to transact with Moses. This will explain why it is not called *his tent*, as if it had been his place of residence, but *the tent*, as we would say, *the office*, or *the department*, or some such phrase.

spot (ver. 9). And now, as the people stood and worshipped (ver. 10), repentant in spirit, and hushed in reverent awe, as in the presence of the God against whom they had sinned, Moses pleads, and the Lord speaks to him face to face as a man with his friend (ver. 11). Notice here, in passing, the wisdom of Moses and the mercy of the Lord in shifting the scene of the conference from the mount, where all was wrapped in clouds, to the tent where the people could follow Moses with their eyes to the tent door, and see him from time to time as he went out and in.

And now, though all that passed on this most memorable occasion is not revealed, we are told what was the main burden of the prayer of Moses. It was for the renewal of the Tabernacle promise, for the restoration of the crowning blessing of the presence of the Lord in the midst of them. And his pleading is not in vain, for the Lord says: "My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest" (ver. 14). But let us not fail to observe the ground on which it is given: "The Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken: for *thou* hast found grace in My sight, and *I know thee by name*." It is for the sake of the mediator that the full pardon is given, and the full blessing restored. And so is it in the new covenant. It is because the Lord Jesus has found grace in the Father's sight that we are pardoned. It is because He knows *Him* by name, that we are accepted. "There is no other name given under heaven among men by which we can be saved" than the name of Him who is the "Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus," of whom

Moses throughout all these wonderful scenes is so instructive a type.

And now we are prepared for observing the results of Moses' meditation.

First, on God's part, there is a renewal of all that had been forfeited by the sin,—three things especially: the Name, the Tables, the Tabernacle. The new revelation of the Name has not only all the same tenderness as before, coupled with holiness and inflexible justice, but it now has a new emphasis on the forgiveness of sin: "And the LORD descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD. And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." The Hebrew language is exhausted, as it were, in order to express the riches of His grace and goodness; and yet it is the same holy God as before, who was made known amid the thunders and tempests of Sinai. Then "the two tables of stone like unto the first" (xxxiv. 4) were again made the basis of the covenant (ver. 10), while new cautions are added and new restraints, so as to keep them safer from temptation in the future (ver. 11–28). And, to crown all, the people are invited to build the Tabernacle according to the pattern shown to Moses on the mount—not far off, where the present "tent of meeting" was, but right in the centre, as originally intended —not as a mere temporary provision, but that God may come and dwell among them, according to His word before the people's sin.

Next, on Moses' part there is a peculiarly rich and blessed experience. The trying ordeal through which the great Leader of Israel passed on this occasion, not only brought out those noble and elevated features in his character which we have noticed, but begat in him a yearning for higher attainments in the knowledge of God than he had as yet reached. The more a good man knows of God, the more he longs to know. And so it was, that after all these days alone with God upon the mount, after these interviews at the "tent of meeting," when God spake to him "face to face as a man speaketh to his friend," his spirit yearns for something higher still, and he pleads: "I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory" (xxxiii. 18). The prayer was gloriously answered, so that the results appeared even on the face of the holy man; for "when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses," on his return from the place where he saw all that was possible for a creature to see of the glory of God, "behold the skin of his face shone" (xxxiv. 30), though he himself was all unconscious of it. There is much that is deeply interesting and richly instructive in this experience of Moses, but our limits will not allow us to dwell on it.

Finally, on the part of the people, there were abundant tokens of thorough repentance. One of these was their *alacrity* to set about the work of erecting the Tabernacle. All was enthusiasm in the camp. Men and women vied with each other in thoughtful and diligent endeavour. Another was the abounding *liberality*. So profuse was it that the receivers of the people's contributions had more than they knew what to do with, so

that the people had actually to be restrained from giving (xxxvi. 5–7). A rare difficulty this in church matters. Would that we had more trouble of this kind on our hands. And why should we not? If the Church of Christ only realized the exceeding grace of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, as these people realized the grace of Jehovah and His servant Moses on this occasion, all our mission treasuries would overflow, and instead of ever-renewed appeals for more, the difficulty would be to restrain the people from giving. Finally, there was the minutest and most careful *obedience* to all the instructions which had been given for the building of the Tabernacle and its furniture, so that when all the work was completed, we are told that "Moses did look upon all the work, and, behold, they had done it as the Lord had commanded, even so had they done it; and Moses blessed them" (xxxix. 43). There could be no better signs of a restored and revived people than just these three things: alacrity in the Lord's service, abounding liberality, and careful and diligent obedience.

And thus we find that the disgraceful lapse of the people, instead of proving, as it threatened, an insurmountable obstacle, only furnished the occasion for illustrating more gloriously than ever the riches of Divine mercy and goodness, for shedding greater lustre on the noble character of the great mediator of the covenant, and leading the people in the end nearer to God than ever before. This in no degree justifies the people for their sin; but it does magnify the glorious grace and exhaustless resources of our God. And so will it be in our case, if we accept of Christ as our Mediator—not only will our

sin be all forgiven and its evil consequences removed, but in the end we shall be nearer to God than even if we had never fallen. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God"; and how unsearchable the riches of His grace. "To God the only wise, be glory through Christ Jesus, for ever. Amen."

X.

THE TABERNACLE.

EXODUS XL.—LEVITICUS I. 1.

WE have taken a rapid survey of the tabernacle revelation, and now we are about to enter upon a similar survey of the tabernacle service, as set forth in the Book of Leviticus. But before we begin the extensive subject of the Levitical ritual, it will be necessary to familiarize our minds with the tabernacle as a whole, and the general significance of its service. There is a strong tendency at the present time to undervalue the importance of the truth taught in the Mosaic ritual. This is due to several causes. One is the strong reaction from that license of interpretation, which led many of the older writers on the tabernacle to find symbols and types in every hook and tassel, pin and cord, of the structure, and to attach meanings quite arbitrary, and many of them exceedingly far-fetched, to every minutest part of the ritual. The reaction from this license was wholesome, but it has gone too far. Another is the disposition to understand by "the law," the moral, as distinguished from the ceremonial, part of the Mosaic institutes. When the law that was given on Sinai is spoken of, we immediately think of the Ten Command-

ments, which, of course, is right enough; but it is not apt to occur to us that the decalogue, though the most important part, is still only a very small part of the whole; and that inasmuch as the tabernacle really carries the decalogue in its bosom, as we have seen, the tabernacle law not only exceeds the rest in bulk, but stands out as the prominent feature, that in which the entire revelation culminates, and by which it is carried down from generation to generation.

Consider for a moment the space that is given to the tabernacle in Exodus. One-third part of the entire book is taken up with it; and it occupies more than two-thirds of the portion devoted to Mount Sinai. And not only so, but all of Leviticus is occupied with it; and a considerable portion of Numbers. Consider, also, how much importance is attached even to its details. First, in the revelation from the Mount, how minute are the instructions given, coupled with the special warning, "See that thou make all things according to the pattern" (Exod. xxv. 9, 40, quoted in Heb. viii. 5). Next, full details are again given in the account of the making of the tabernacle and all its furniture (chap. xxxv.–xxxix.) Then the most important details are repeated a third time, in the directions for setting up the tabernacle (xl. 1–16), and still a fourth time, in the account of its actual erection and dedication (ver. 17–33). Surely all this goes to show that it is certainly unscriptural to attach little importance to the tabernacle and its significance.

In dealing with the tabernacle revelation, I had occasion to make some general remarks about symbolic language, showing that it was not only natural but neces-

sary that language of this kind should be used, and that the symbols employed must be such as the people could understand, and therefore old and familiar, which, of course, accounts for the Egyptian origin of many of them; and further, that, though we have difficulty sometimes in translating the symbols, on account of their being foreign to our western and modern modes of thought, it does not follow that those to whom they were given would have the same difficulty.

Bearing these things in mind, let us now endeavour to set in as clear a light as possible the relation between the symbols and the types of the tabernacle. The want of clear ideas on this subject has led to much confusion of thought, and has brought discredit on many an interpretation which, though correct enough, nevertheless seems arbitrary and unfounded, simply because there has been a failure to show the connection of the secondary and typical meaning, which seems fanciful, with the primary and essential one, which no intelligent person would think of questioning.

A type, as distinguished from a symbol, is prophetic. It refers to something in the future which it foreshadows. The symbolism of the tabernacle was significant of truth which belonged to the time then present; its types were significant of truth which belonged to time then future, to the times of fulfilment. By its symbols the tabernacle and its services were a sermon, or rather collection of sermons; in its types, a prophecy or bundle of prophecies. Inasmuch as we live in the times of fulfilment, the typical significance of the tabernacle has the most practical value for us. And for this reason, probably,

the most popular expositions dwell almost exclusively upon the types. But the difficulty is, that the ordinary reader is too apt to think these expositions exceedingly fanciful; and he is not to be blamed for so thinking, when the typical meaning is all that is presented. For he readily sees that without the New Testament this typical significance could scarcely be apprehended, and therefore he cannot think it at all probable that the children of Israel saw the meaning which the modern interpreters find in them. And it does seem irrational to suppose that a complicated system of symbols should be given to the children of Israel to be a mere dumb show for centuries, and then to be understood and interpreted for the first time after the people to whom they had been given were "scattered and peeled"!

The true order is, first to ascertain what the tabernacle and its service meant to Israel, what truth it taught them; and then, inasmuch as the truth which they had was the same truth in germ, which later on was unfolded in the New Testament, we readily recognise the typical relation of the earlier to the later truth. For it must, of course, be remembered that the connection between Moses and Christ is not accidental or incidental, but that they are related together as the bud to the flower. A bud is a thing of beauty in the springtime of the year; but it is more, it is a prophecy of the flower which will blossom out in the summer. It is very plain that if you had never seen a flower, the bud, while yielding up its beauty to your gaze, would not have for you any prophetic significance; but after the flower had appeared, then you could look back to the bud and

recognise in it, not only a thing of beauty in itself, but a true type of the flower that was to come. So in the same way the symbols of the tabernacle had their own beauty and truth and value to the people of the time; but besides this, they were buddings forth in the early spring-time, which would afterwards blossom out into the lovely flowers of the "truth as it is in Jesus," when "the fulness of the time" had come. And so it comes to pass that we who live in the later days of the great year of the Lord, are better able than the Jewish fathers themselves to recognise the prophetic aspect of the old and ever valuable symbols of the tabernacle. They could understand the symbolic meaning more easily than we, but we can understand the prophetic meaning better than they.

It may be well to take an illustration in order to make this as intelligible as possible. Perhaps the simplest we can take is the lamb that was offered daily, morning and evening, on the altar of burnt-offering in the court (Exod. xxix. 38–42). This was perhaps the most familiar feature of the whole service. As the altar stood in the court, all the people could see it; and it was always to be seen. The morning lamb had scarcely disappeared when the evening lamb was brought, and again the evening lamb remained on the altar till the morning lamb was offered in its place, so that practically the sacrificial lamb was always there, night and day continually. Now, remember, that as the devout Israelite looked at this sacrifice upon the altar, he had these words of the law to help him (many people forget that in the understanding of the symbols the Israelites had not only the

words of the law, but the Levitical instruction to aid them): "This shall be a continual burnt-offering throughout your generations at the door of the tent of meeting before Jehovah, where I will meet you to speak there unto thee" (ver. 42). He had also those very numerous passages which connected the slaying of the animal with his sin, and the offering of the blood upon the altar with an atonement for it. How, then, could he fail to see in that smoking sacrifice a most impressive sermon on the exceeding sinfulness and fatal consequences of sin, on the need of an atonement to take away that sin before there could be a meeting between him and God; and above all, an assurance of the fact that there was forgiveness for him, and a way opened by which, notwithstanding his sinfulness, he might draw near to God. You have only to read the Psalms to have evidence of the impressiveness with which these great lessons were wrought into the hearts and lives of those who were Israelites indeed. Thus in this single rite there were most impressively conveyed the two most cardinal truths of our holy religion: the exceeding evil of sin, and the good tidings that God has provided an atonement for it, by which a way is opened up for restoration to God's favour. All this belonged to the mere symbolism of the morning and evening sacrifice. But besides the sermon, there was also a prophecy there. Not only was the lamb a symbol of the forgiveness of sins, it was also a type of "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

And as with the rite as a whole, so with the particular features of it. Take, for instance, the continuity of the

presentation: "This shall be a continual burnt-offering." The symbolic meaning of this was very plain, so that every intelligent and devout Israelite would see it. It was this, that forgiveness of sins was to be had not merely at set times, as on the great Atonement Day, or on the occasion of the special offerings of feast days, but at any time, at all times. The way to God was always open for the repentant sinner. The typical meaning is just as evident to us, who know that it was the nearest the language of symbol could come to foreshadowing the offering up of the Lamb of God "once for all." The *continual* efficacy of the many was a prophecy of the *perpetual* efficacy of the one.

There is indeed evidence to show that some of the more enlightened Israelites had glimpses of the prophetic meaning in their symbols. We can easily understand this by remembering how strongly their thoughts were directed to the coming Messiah, and we can well imagine that many of the things which must have seemed mysterious or enigmatical in the truth as conveyed in the symbols of the tabernacle, while no doubt begetting scepticism in the undevout, just as similar difficulties do still, would lead truly reverent minds onwards to the coming of Him in whom all these enigmas would be solved. To recur to our illustration of the daily sacrifice. A scoffing Israelite might say: "What nonsense, this offering of a lamb all the time, as if that could make any difference! It is enough for me to try to do my duty to my family and neighbours, and pay no attention to such a piece of superstition. What connection can there possibly be between the offering of a

lamb upon that altar and the pardoning of anybody's sin?" But the devout Israelite would answer: "It is true I cannot fully explain the connection; but there must be something in it, for it does bring me and many others near to God. Listen, for instance, to that poet singing there, as if inspired: 'O the blessedness of the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.' Besides, have we not good evidence that God did speak to our fathers on the Mount, and that this ordinance came originally from Him? And then do not the prophets tell us of a coming Saviour, the great Messiah who will make all these things plain? Does not one of them say of Him: 'He is led as a lamb to the slaughter'? What if the Messiah Himself be the Lamb to whom all these daily sacrifices are continually pointing?" But while it is quite possible to conceive of a devout Israelite of the time of Hezekiah reaching so far as this in his thoughtful musing, it is important to remember that it was not necessary for the faithful under the old covenant to see so much, in order to obtain the forgiveness of their sins. *We* must believe in "the Lamb of God," because He has been revealed to our faith. But all that was necessary for *them* to believe was the creed of the 130th Psalm, the central point of which is this: "but *there is forgiveness with Thee*, that Thou mayest be feared."

Let us now endeavour to present a very general sketch of the significance of the tabernacle, taking as our guide the account of its erection and dedication given in Exodus xl. 17–38. Following the order of the passage,

we shall have a threefold division of the subject: (1) The tabernacle proper, verses 17–19; (2) its apartments and furniture, verses 30–33; (3) the cloud without and the glory within, verses 34–38.

A brief glance at each of these in their order.

I. *The Tabernacle proper.* Recall the solemn ratification of the Covenant recorded in Exodus xxiv., when Moses erects an altar, and surrounds it with twelve pillars, representing the twelve tribes. The same general idea, with elaboration in detail, is found in the tabernacle. With its boards and its pillars, resting on the silver "sockets" or sills, made from the atonement money of the children of Israel (Exod. xxx. 16, and xxxviii. 25–27), and bound together with the golden bars, it represented "the people builded together for the habitation of God"; while the glow of gold around, and the gleam of colour above from the overspread "curtains of fine twined linen, and blue, and purple, and scarlet, with cherubims of cunning work" (xxvi. 1), told that all the enclosure was sacred ground.*

II. *The divisions of the sacred enclosure, with their furniture.* First, the Holy of Holies (xl. 20, 21). Here was the Throne of God. And what kind of throne was it? A "Mercy Seat." But what was under the Mercy Seat? "The testimony," the Holy Law in its ark of gold. The throne, then, was *a Throne of Grace, founded on Holiness.*

Here we have the two leading thoughts of God which the tabernacle symbolises: His HOLINESS and His

* See Cave on the "Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice," p. 118.

MERCY. As in every revelation of Himself which God has given us, "Mercy and truth meet together, righteousness and peace embrace each other." That which is prominent, that which is uppermost, that which appears, is the mercy; but the mercy is ever founded on justice. His throne is a throne of mercy; but in order to obtain the mercy we must approach it in the way of holiness.

One thing more before we leave the holy of holies: the veil (ver. 21). Though God is seated on His throne of grace, this is not apparent to every onlooker. A veil is over it. But blessed be His name, it is only a veil. It is not a closed door or an iron gate which comes between us and our merciful God. No; it is a veil, which may be moved aside at the fitting time.

When we reach the outer apartment, which is next described (ver. 22–27), we see what provision is made for entering within the veil. There, in that outer apartment. is the shew-bread, literally "bread of the presence" (ver. 22–26), the seven-branched candlestick, all lighted up (ver. 24, 25), and the golden altar with sweet incense rising from it (ver. 26, 27). The meaning of all this is not difficult to see. Though the presence of the Lord cannot be seen on this side of the veil, there is bread of the presence for those who come into His sanctuary. There is also light, not like the glory within the veil, "as of the sun shining in his strength," but light as of a lamp, fed perpetually with oil, the well-known symbol of Divine grace. And then right in front of the curtain is the golden altar, with the incense rising from it and wafted within, teaching that, though there is a veil

between man and God, yet by prayer we can penetrate within it and reach the mercy-seat, the throne of God.

This outer apartment also is covered with a hanging at the door (ver. 28), so that even the bread of the presence, and the light of the golden candlestick, and the altar with its incense are closed against sinful men. But again, it is not a door of wood, far less a gate of iron; it is an open door with only a hanging before it, and there right by (ver. 29) is the altar of burnt-offering, with the laver between. Here again the symbolism is very apparent. The only way by which sinful men can enter into the apartment, where are to be found the bread of the presence, the light of the lamps, and the incense altar of devotion, is by the altar of burnt-offering and the laver, *i. e.*, by atonement and by washing.

Finally, the work is finished by rearing up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar (ver. 33), which showed that even the altar in these days was not open to all men without distinction, but only to the chosen people who had been separated from the other nations of the earth, and to all those who by becoming proselytes showed their willingness to enter with the chosen people within "the hanging of the court gate."

III. *The Cloud without and the Glory within:* "Then a cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle" (ver. 34). These were the symbols of the presence of the Lord, the tokens that He had accepted the habitation that had been prepared for Him, and had come down to dwell among His people, and to guide them in all their ways (ver. 36–38). The symbol visible outside was a cloud, which, however,

glowed with light in its interior, so that in the night it had the appearance of fire. What a fitting symbol of His presence who "dwells in light that is inaccessible," whom dark clouds cover from the eyes of man. But within, the glory of the Lord was shining so brightly that even "Moses was not able to enter" (ver. 35). We thus see that it is in mercy as well as in holiness that a veil is spread between us and the glory of the Divine presence. The cloud without served the same purpose as the veil within. It shaded the intolerable brightness of the heavenly light from eyes of men that could not bear it.

So much for symbolism, all of which must have been quite as apparent to the children of Israel as it is to us, and even more so. And now we can only give a hint or two as to the easy and natural transition from the symbolical to the typical significance. As the symbolic meaning has been unveiled, has not the typical been starting into light at every point? Have you not seen Christ in it all through? The tabernacle itself was fulfilled in Christ, who "was made flesh and dwelt [literally, 'tabernacled'] among us"—His human nature being the habitation of God, and His Divine nature the Glory within—He "tabernacled among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John i. 14). And the tabernacle was fulfilled not only in His human body, but in "His body, the Church," He Himself being the glory within it.

Then how easy is it to see in the altar of burnt-offering, the atonement which Christ has made for us by the sacrifice of Himself, by which we enter into the holy

place; and in the altar of incense the intercession of Christ, by which we enter into the holiest of all.

And the veil—how beautifully is its typical significance brought out in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. x., ver. 19, 20): "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh." How beautiful the thought! The Divine glory was veiled, as well as revealed, in human likeness. And as it was with His human body, so is it with "His body, the Church." As long as we continue in the flesh, the glory "doth not yet appear," but as soon as this tabernacle is dissolved, it will be as the rending of a veil which hides the Divine glory; and then "we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is"—not as He was when His Divine glory was veiled in mortal flesh, but as He is now in the heavenly radiancy, the very symbol of which was so bright that even the eyes of Moses could not bear its lustre. The subject is exceedingly tempting; but we may not offer more than a mere hint of it.

And now only notice, in conclusion, what a beautiful close this is to the Book of Exodus, and what a contrast to the Book of Genesis. It began with, "In the beginning God"; and it ended with "a coffin in Egypt." This book began with *Israel in Egypt*, a poor, oppressed, wretched multitude of slaves, and it ends with *God in Israel*, glorious enough in itself, but still more glorious as a prophecy of still greater things to come, a prophecy first of "Emmanuel, God with us," and last of the second coming of the same Emmanuel, when that great voice

shall be heard out of heaven, saying, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And He that sat upon the throne, said, Behold I make all things new. . . . . And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads."

XI.

RITUAL OF THE ALTAR.

LEVITICUS I.–VII.

LEVITICUS is the book of Old Testament worship. In Exodus there were two grand themes: first, Israel brought out of Egypt to meet with God; and then, God descending from His holy heaven to meet with them (on Sinai) and to dwell with them (in the Tabernacle). And now that God dwells among His people, it is necessary that they should be well informed as to the manner in which they may with acceptance draw near to Him. Such is the object and intent of the book before us.

The historical importance of the Book of Leviticus is very great. One might as well expect to understand the history of Greece, while remaining in ignorance of philosophy and art;—or of England, while knowing nothing whatever of parliament and the constitution; as to understand the history of Israel without a knowledge of the Hebrew ritual. Think how much labour is spent in the study of the classical mythology at our schools and universities, not for any value there is in itself, but for the light it throws upon classical literature; and yet how little do Christian people realize the importance of studying the modes of worship among the Jews, in order

to understand their literature, which is our Bible. And besides, not only is the knowledge of the tabernacle worship necessary in order to understand the sacred literature, but it is of real value in itself; not merely of antiquarian and psychological value, like the ancient mythologies, but of present practical value, as throwing light upon the New Testament and illustrating that Gospel on which our hopes are founded.

This book of Leviticus, like the tabernacle itself, is rough and unattractive on the outside, and may even provoke the sneers of the mere passers-by; but it is all glorious within, and to those who with reverent feet enter its portal, there will be unfolded no inconsiderable amount of "the unsearchable riches of Christ." There are the rough "badgers' skins" without; but within there is the glory of gold and the beauty of "the fine twined linen, with blue and purple and scarlet, and cherubims cunningly wrought."

After all, the Old Testament worship was essentially the same as ours. There were the same thoughts in it, the same emotions, the same purposes, the same aspirations, the same hopes. The difference was only this, that while they worshipped mainly through sight-forms, addressed to the eye, we worship through sound-forms, addressed to the ear. Constituted as we are, a formless worship is impossible. Speech is so near akin to spirit, that we often forget that after all it is only form. It is the inaudible emotion lying back of it, in which the worship essentially consists. By long familiarity the forms of speech have become transparent; and just as a glass, when exceedingly clear, attracts no attention to itself,

but allows it to pass through to the object on the other side, so is it with the medium of speech through which we are wont to convey and receive spiritual impressions. But if beings far more spiritual and ethereal than we, were to examine our worship as we look upon that of the children of Israel, it would seem as rude and gross as theirs may seem to us. We must make allowance for the difference of culture, and remember at the same time that if we would only familiarize ourselves with the sight-forms of the Old Testament, they would become more transparent to us, or rather the veil which the Apostle Paul speaks of as over the eyes of so many in the reading of the Old Testament (2 Cor. iii. 15, 16) would be taken away, and through these forms we should clearly see the beauty, grace, and glory of the Gospel in Leviticus.

In the erection of the tabernacle (Exod. xl.) the order was from the Holy of Holies within outwards to the Court. In the directions for worship the order is reversed. Each order is appropriate in its place. In the setting up of the tabernacle, the prominent thought was the coming down of God to dwell with His people. Hence the throne, the mercy-seat, comes first, and after, in succession, the veils and barriers which guarded the shrine from unhallowed intrusion. Now, the prominent thought is the access of the people to God, and accordingly the beginning is made from the court, through which alone there can be access to the inner shrine.

The ritual of the Court resolves itself into the ritual of "the altar of burnt-offering," for though the laver

stood also in the court, it more properly appertained to the holy place, the special sphere of the priests. Only the priests were allowed to use the laver; and, standing as it did at the door of the holy place, so that they might wash their hands and their feet before entering the sacred precincts, its connection with the court was only incidental. The altar of burnt-offering was the centre of the worship of the court.

This altar was the foundation of all the tabernacle worship. The priests could not enter into the holy place except on the ground of sacrifice presented on the brazen altar. Nor could the high-priest on the great atonement day enter the holy of holies, without having first offered not only the ordinary sacrifice, but an additional sin-offering on the altar in the court. Nothing could be more plainly and impressively taught than the truth which stands out here, that without an atoning sacrifice there can be no access for guilty man into the presence of the holy God. Not only was the Shekinah glory within the veil impossible of access; but the bread of the presence, the light of the lamps, the privileges of the altar of incense were all closed, until a sacrifice had been offered upon the altar. Thus were the children of Israel taught, and thus too are we taught, that the first thing for the sinner to do, before he can taste the heavenly bread, before he can see the heavenly light, before he can even pray with acceptance, is to avail himself of the atonement which God has provided.

The altar was the people's place of meeting with God. Only the priests could enter the holy place. Only the high-priest could enter the holy of holies. But the altar

was free to all. The call was addressed to every child of Israel: "Come into His courts, and bring an offering with you." The atonement which God provides is free to all, without exception and without distinction.

It will be readily seen that the prominent place given to the altar in the book of Leviticus and in the worship of the tabernacle, guards against one of the great abuses that have been usually connected with priestly authority. Wherever a powerful hierarchy has established itself, there has been priestly tyranny, and the order has been, the people for the priests, and not the priests for the people. Not so with the priesthood which the Lord appointed. His priesthood was for the people. The people's altar came first, and was the foundation of all. That which gained access to God was no secret rite transacted within the veil, but an offering presented in the open court in sight of all the people.

This altar of burnt-offering in the court is henceforth to be the fixed place for the offering of sacrifice. Up to this time an altar might be erected anywhere. Now the worship must centre in the one altar. We can readily see how this would tend to preserve the purity of worship. Where many altars are erected, the tendency is to polytheism, and the restriction to the one would be a valuable safeguard of the doctrine of one living and true God. Besides, the altar in the court was so surrounded by other symbols of truth, that the doctrine of sacrifice was much less likely there to fall into those abuses which it is extremely difficult to keep apart from it. In particular, the worshipper at this altar had his face always directed towards that holy law, which, as we have seen,

was the cynosure of the tabernacle service, so that only those who shut their eyes to what the Lord had plainly placed before them, could allow sacrifices of conscience to degenerate into sacrifices of superstition.

This leads us to pass from the altar to the sacrifice upon it. And here we shall interpose a word upon the objection which rises to the minds of many, as they open this book of Leviticus, beginning with "The Lord called unto Moses, and spake," and then proceeding with so many tedious and apparently unprofitable details. Is it not derogatory to the Divine dignity to conceive of His personally prescribing all these minutiæ of ritual? But what if it were absolutely necessary, to save such a system from gross abuse, that the Lord Himself should prescribe the details of the sacrificial rites? Consider here, what is the great distinction between the sacrifices of the Levitical worship, and the sacrificial rites of heathenism. The sacrifices of the heathen have been for the most part dictated by fear, and have assumed the form of an appeal to the selfishness of the supposed deity, as it were a bribe, the intrinsic value of the gift being the essential factor in the case. The Jewish sacrifices, on the other hand, were not left to man's fear, but provided by God's love, and so arranged that the appeal was always to the conscience of the man and to the holiness of God. Man always goes astray when left to find his own way to God. If access is to be had at all, God must show the way; and when He shows it, it is found to be a way not of selfishness, but of conscience, not of superstition, but of holiness.

The first seven chapters of Leviticus are taken up

with the ritual of the altar. Let us, in glancing over these, look first at the general features of the sacrificial worship and then at the special features of the different sacrifices.

I. GENERAL FEATURES OF SACRIFICE.

The sacrifices were essentially sacrifices of animals, slain first, and then offered upon the altar. For, though "the meat-offering" was simply a presentation of flour and frankincense, with some accompaniments, yet it never stood alone, but was an adjunct of some other offering, especially of the burnt-offering; so that even this is no exception. The animal sacrifice, then, is that in which we are to seek the true idea of the altar ritual. And here there are four main elements: the presentation of the animal, the killing of it, the disposition made of the blood, and the burning of the remains.

First, *the presentation of the animal.* In this there was no doubt the idea of bringing a gift to the Lord; but this conception was not at all prominent. Throughout the ritual it is kept in the background, and when at any time the people were in danger of falling into the heathen notion of propitiating God by the value of their gifts, they were reminded of their folly in words like these: "I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goats out of thy fields; for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills."

The animal was brought as a representative of the offerer, as is indicated by the laying on of his hands, a very important part of the ritual. See chap. i. verse 4: "he shall put [literally, "lean"] his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering; and it shall be accepted for him

to make atonement for him." Besides this, there is good authority for translating in verse 3: "he shall offer it *for his acceptance* at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." But if this be disputed, and the translation of our version be preferred, the fourth verse is explicit enough, and shows plainly that the animal was looked upon as the man's representative.

And now we can see the appropriateness of the choice of an animal, inasmuch as in all the lower creation the life of an animal is that which comes nearest to the life of a man; and the choice of the domestic animals is also explained, as those with which man is so much more closely associated than with other creatures. The regulation that only those without blemish could be offered, conveys the idea that the representative of man at the altar of God must be without stain. It will be seen, however, that the full explanation of this was veiled until the fulness of the time when the Antitype was offered a sacrifice upon the world altar of the cross. For if there had been nothing more than the mere idea of representing the sinner, it would have seemed that the more blemishes the better, and some feeble, crooked, rickety creature would have been the best and truest symbol of man in his sin and estrangement from God; but when we add to the force of the symbol the significance of the type, we see how it was necessary that the animal which should take the sinner's place upon the altar of burnt-offering must be without blemish, in order truly to represent "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

The killing of the animal is readily understood as soon

as we know that it was regarded as the man's representative. It was an acknowledgment of his guilt, guilt deserving of death. And this was made still more obvious and impressive by the practice in certain cases of confession of sin on the part of the offerer as he leaned his hand upon the animal's head.

At this point we encounter an objection which appears very strong to modern "culture." This continual slaughter strikes one with refined sensibilities as peculiarly revolting. We do not deny it. We admit that there was much connected with the ritual of the altar of a revolting nature; but why? Do we not need to be taught that sin is a revolting thing? What can be more important in the education of a human being than to have his mind filled with horror against sin; and this is not to be accomplished by pictures of statuary, or any kind of mere æsthetic cultivation. Greece had abundance of the finest culture. There was everything to please the eye in her temples and monuments; but think of the corruption in Greek hearts, think of the abominations of Greek society! In the Jewish worship there were plain truths plainly and even roughly taught; and what was the consequence? A nation, as Matthew Arnold so fully brings out, that stood alone among the nations of the earth as a witness for righteousness and purity in personal and social life. Intellectual and æsthetic culture, without the stern foundation of good morals, hatred of sin and love of holiness, produces mere "whited sepulchres, beautiful without, while within they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness." It is greatly to be feared that some of those, who are most

fastidious about that which appears to the senses, are least scrupulous as to that which passes in the secret of the heart. Better, far better, have that which will startle us without, than all rotten within. The true answer to the objection which a superficially refined taste brings against the barbarity of the Hebrew worship, is to be found in the outcome of it, first in the Hebrew character for morality and purity, in contrast with the heathen nations of the time; and next in the whole tone and tenour of the Hebrew literature, which we can with all appropriateness call "*the holy writings*."

The third general feature is *the disposition of the blood*. And here we are apt to fall into an error, by transferring our modern ideas to the old ritual. We associate blood with *death*. But it was not so among the Jews. They, on the contrary, associated it with *life*. An illustration of this will be seen in Leviticus xvii. 10–14, especially these words, repeated again and again: "the life of the flesh is in the blood." The idea of death was in the killing of the animal; and the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar meant the dedication to God of a life which had been reached through death. "Dead unto sin": such was the idea connected with the slain animal. "Alive unto God": such was the idea connected with the sprinkling of the blood upon the altar. Thus, while penitence is the prominent feature of the presentation and the killing, faith is prominent in the sprinkling of the blood.

Remember that, when we speak of faith on the part of the Hebrew worshipper, we do not mean faith in Christ consciously experienced. All that it was necessary for

him to believe, and probably all that the average worshipper did believe, was that in the mercy of God, through the presentation of a sacrifice upon the altar, there was atonement provided for him; and though he could not explain or understand the manner of it, it was enough to know the fact of it. And as a matter of fact, we know that in this way many, like David, had their sins forgiven and their souls cleansed, became "dead unto sin and alive unto God," through the penitent and believing use of God's own ordinances.

Lastly, *the burning on the altar.* Here again we are apt to be misled by modern notions and associations. We associate burning with torture, and some have actually said that the burning of the animal on the altar was a symbol of the torments of hell. These ideas do not come from the Bible itself. Perhaps Dante is as much responsible for them as any other single authority. If we take the Bible itself for our guide, we shall reach the conclusion that the idea was that of dedication on the part of man and acceptance on the part of God. The placing on the altar was the symbol of dedication on the part of man, the burning was the symbol of acceptance on the part of God. The "burnt-offering" was distinguished from the rest by being wholly burnt upon the altar. And the word by which it is designated comes from a Hebrew root which means to go up, to ascend to God. We read of its ascending to God "for a sweet savour," and "for a savour of rest"; and there is no authority whatever for the truly revolting idea that even a symbol of suffering was a sweet savour unto God. When Elijah confronted the priests of Baal upon Mount

Carmel, how was it that the Lord testified His acceptance of His servant? Was it not by fire? God's acceptance of that which man has dedicated to Him in sacrifice, is the idea involved in the burning on the altar.

There was, however, another burning, which had a different meaning. In some of the sacrifices, notably the greater sin-offering, the animal was not burnt upon the altar, but was carried outside the camp and consumed there. But it is important to notice that the Hebrew word for this burning is quite different. The word used for burning upon the altar is the same word that is used for the burning of incense in the holy place, with which the happiest and most delightful thoughts are always connected. But the word applied to the burning of the sin-offering without the camp is an entirely different word, meaning to burn up, to destroy; and it may be that in this burning we have a picture of the wrath of God against sin, though even here there is some difficulty from the fact that these offerings were regarded as especially holy.

II. SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE DIFFERENT SACRIFICES.

Five species of sacrifice were offered on the altar of burnt-offering. Following the order of the first seven chapters of Leviticus, these were the burnt-offering, the meat-offering, the peace-offering, the sin-offering, and the trespass-offering. This may be regarded as the historical order. The burnt-offering comes first, because it is the old historical sacrifice, which has been offered from the beginning, before the differentiation of the species.

Viewed in this light, it may be regarded as comprehending in itself the significance of all the others; and accordingly it was eminently suitable that the perpetual offering—the lamb of the morning and evening sacrifice—should be a burnt-offering. For these reasons then, the burnt-offering occupies the foremost position in the rules for the ritual of the altar. The meat-offering follows, because of its intimate association with the burnt-offering, of which it was a special accompaniment. The peace-offering comes next, as the natural result; and besides, there is some evidence that already, before the institution in Leviticus, the peace-offering had developed as a shoot from the old original burnt-offering (see Exod. xxiv. 5). The sin-offering and trespass-offering were entirely new, and therefore come last. They were intimately connected with the new revelation of law, inasmuch as "by the law is the knowledge of sin."

If we could devote a separate lecture to the consideration of each of the offerings, it might be well to follow the same order; but inasmuch as we must take them all in one view, it will be better to follow the order which was observed when the offerings were presented in series, a very good example of which we have in Leviticus ix. 15–18: "And he brought the people's offering, and took the goat, which was the *sin-offering* for the people, and slew it, and offered it for sin, as the first. And he brought the *burnt-offering*, and offered it according to the manner. And he brought the *meat-offering*, and filled his hand out of it, and burnt it upon the altar, beside the burnt sacrifice of the morning. He slew also the bullock and the ram for a sacrifice of *peace-*

offerings." Here we have the logical, as the other was the historical order. The sin-offering (or trespass-offering, as the case might be) came first; then the burnt-offering with its associated meat-offering; and finally the peace-offering. This, as you see, gives us three main sacrifices: the sin-offering, the burnt-offering, the peace-offering. The burnt-offering occupied the central position, having as its antecedent the sin-offering, and as its consequent the peace-offering. We have already seen what the essential significance of the burnt-offering is. It is dedication on the part of man and acceptance on the part of God. What is the antecedent of this dedication and acceptance? It is atonement. Hence the sin-offering preceded the burnt-offering. What is the consequence of this dedication and acceptance? Peace with God and joy in His salvation. Hence the peace-offering* followed the burnt-offering.

Let us now look at the different offerings, following the order just indicated.

1. *The Sin-offering* (Lev. iv.) The prominent idea in the sin-offering is that of atonement and forgiveness. It was appointed for sins of "ignorance" (ver. 2); but it would be a mistake to suppose that it was limited to what we understand by sins of ignorance. Ignorance was distinguished, not from knowledge, but from presumption (see Ps. xix. 12, 13). The idea was that there was no atonement for a man in a hard-hearted, defiant

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* It ought to be remembered that the Hebrew word for *peace* had a larger meaning than ours. It included welfare in the widest sense, as can be seen from the customary salutation, "Peace be unto thee."

state of mind. We shall see more clearly what is meant, if we look at the statute which refers to the common people (ver. 27, 28): "if any one of the common people sin through ignorance . . . . or *if his sin, which he had sinned, come to his knowledge*." This evidently covers the case of a man who had been led astray by temptation, but who has now become convicted of the sin which in the time of his wandering from God he was induced to commit; and it as certainly excludes the man who still, in defiance of God's law, "sets the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face." We see, then, that the atonement was provided, not only for sins which had been unconsciously committed, but also for sins, the guilt of which after their commission had been borne upon the sinner so strongly, as to lead him to seek an atonement and forgiveness for them. And indeed there seems to be in the Epistle to the Hebrews a reference to this twofold application of the sin-offering, where the high-priest is spoken of as one that "can have compassion on *the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way*" (Heb. v. 2). We conclude, then, that the sin-offering was intended for all sins of which a man truly and heartily repented, so that it could be fairly said that his sin, when he committed it, appeared in a very different light to him, from that in which it now appears as he essays to bring his gift to the altar.

There were grades of sin-offerings; but it is important to observe that these were grades of rank and position in the person, not of heinousness in the sin. A more solemn expiation was necessary for a sin of the high-priest (ver. 3), who represented the people at large, and

of the whole congregation (ver. 13), than for individual sins; and the sin of a ruler (ver. 22) was regarded as calling for more marked attention than that of one of the common people (ver. 27). The propriety of this is sufficiently apparent.

The sin-offering for the high-priest, and that for the congregation were almost exactly alike, and as distinguished from the sin-offering for the ruler or the individual member of the congregation, the former is sometimes spoken of as the greater sin-offering, the other being considered the lesser one. In the greater sin-offering (which we choose as the characteristic one), the two outstanding features were the disposition of the blood, and the burning of the entire body (with the exception of the fatty parts, which were offered on the altar) outside the camp. These two parts of the ritual were so arranged as to present the extremest contrast. The blood was not only, as in the case of the ordinary sacrifice, sprinkled upon the altar in the court; but it was carried into the holy place, and there sprinkled seven times upon the veil. Remember, this was as near as it was possible to go to the inner shrine, except on the great atonement day, which only came once in the year. Then, besides the seven times upon (or towards) the veil, it was put upon the horns of the altar of incense, and the rest of it poured out at the base of the altar into the court. Here then we have the blood which is the life, carried far in, to the very threshold of the inner sanctuary. On the other hand, the body of death was carried far out to "a clean place" without the camp, and there burned and destroyed. Is not the symbolism

very instructive? "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us." Our sins, where are they? Away, without the camp, out of sight, destroyed, forgotten. Ourselves, where are we? Our life is now not only on the altar, but carried into the holy place, there hid in the secret of His presence. Or to give it in New Testament form: "we are dead, and our life is hid with Christ in God" (Col. iii. 3). And what is the foundation of all this? Behold the altar: at its base the blood of atonement plentifully poured out; on its summit the fat of the sacrifice arising with acceptance before God.

Another distinctive feature of the sin-offering was the limitation to one animal. In the burnt-offering and the peace-offering there might be many; but in the sin-offering only one. And in this connection it is very interesting to observe the manner in which the congregation of Israel is taught to identify itself with its sin-offering (ver. 15): "And the elders of the congregation shall lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before the Lord." A most impressive picture! And how much of hallowed significance in its typical relations do we see, in the light of that great sacrificial prophecy of Isaiah, where, speaking of the coming Saviour as One to be "led as a lamb to the slaughter," he says: "the Lord hath made the iniquities of us all to meet on Him"! (Isa. liii. 6, margin).

The Trespass-offering may be considered as a variety of the sin-offering. The one shades into the other, as will be seen by reading the fifth chapter, verses 1–13, and also by their having the same "law": "as the sin

offering is, so is the trespass-offering: there is one law for them " (Lev. vii. 7).

The distinguishing characteristic of the trespass-offering proper was restitution. The offences for which it was offered were such as admitted of restitution, and the distinction from the sin-offering cannot be better expressed than in the words of Cave: "the sin and trespass-offerings were both sacrifices for sins; but in the former the leading idea was that of *atonement*, the expiation of sin by a substituted life; in the latter the leading feature was that of *satisfaction*, the wiping out of sin by the payment of a recompense." *

It is well worthy of note that in the trespass-offering for sins against God, the ritual prescribed was sacrifice first, restitution following; while in those against man the order was reversed: restitution first, followed by sacrifice on the altar. The appropriateness of the difference will be readily seen. In the former case, where the sin consisted in withholding from God that which was His due, it was not really God that lost anything, it was the sinner. Giving to God is not regarded as a debt which a man must pay, but rather as a privilege which he may enjoy; and accordingly before a man can enjoy the privilege of which he has foolishly deprived himself, he must come and offer his sacrifice upon the altar. But when the sinner has been withholding from his fellow-man that which is his due, the delinquency is regarded in the light of a debt, and he is not allowed to go to the altar of God until he has paid his debt, and

* "Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice," p. 106.

not only discharged the principal in full, but added one-fifth part thereto; and then, and not till then, may he come to the place of meeting with God. We know the application our Lord made of this old principle: "when thou bringest thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way, *first* be reconciled to thy brother, and *then* come and offer thy gift." And it is as important now as ever it was, to remember that if any of us have wronged our neighbour, and restitution is possible, there is absolutely no way of forgiveness open until restitution has been made.

2. *The Burnt-offering* (chap. i.) We have already seen that the burnt-offering, being the old historical sacrifice, included in itself all the separate ideas which were expressed in the different offerings; but its distinctive feature was that of dedication, self-surrender, the offerer's yielding of himself unto God. Hence it was entirely burnt upon the altar, and yet not in one piece, but after its different pieces had been carefully separated and cleansed (ver. 6–9); and, after it had been thus prepared and placed upon the altar, it ascended to heaven by fire, "a sweet savour unto the Lord" (ver. 9). We need no other commentary upon this than the words of the Apostle Paul in Romans xii. 1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God [he refers especially to the gift of Christ as a sin-offering, which has been the main subject of the previous chapters], that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." There we have not

only a commentary on the old burnt-offering, but a suggestive presentation of the difference between the old one and that which is required in the new covenant. "Present your bodies" (as distinguished from the bodies of bulls or of goats), "a living sacrifice" (as distinguished from the slain sacrifice of the old covenant, "holy" (there we have the significance of the separation of the parts, and the cleansing of the inwards), "acceptable unto God" (the sweet savour of Lev. i. 9), "which is your reasonable service" (as distinguished from the symbolical service of the old economy). No other exposition of the symbolism of the burnt-offering is needed than these striking words.

The Meat-offering (or rather, bread-offering, for the word "meat" has changed its meaning since our translation was made) was an accompaniment of the burnt-offering, and therefore must be looked at in its connection with it (Lev. ii.) It consisted in the offering of fine flour (ver. 1), or bread made of fine flour (ver. 4, 5, 7), with oil and frankincense (ver. 1), and salt (ver. 13). Its symbolic meaning is quite obvious. Just as the burnt-offering symbolized the dedication of the man himself to God, with all his powers and faculties, the bread-offering signified the dedication to God of the fruit of his labours, the produce of his industry. In its fullest sense it symbolized the dedication of his life-energy to God in holy obedience. The close association of bread with life throughout the Scriptures is quite familiar to us, and perhaps our Lord had this offering in mind when He said: "My meat [bread] is to do the will of him that sent Me, and to finish His work" (John iv. 34). But

while in its fullest sense the bread-offering may be understood as symbolizing the entire new life which is the result of our dedicating of ourselves to God, its most obvious application is to the dedication of our substance to Him, to whom we have dedicated ourselves.

The oil to be poured upon the offering has here its invariable significance of heavenly grace, and the frankincense the devotional spirit in which the offering should be presented. The salt is spoken of as "the salt of the covenant of thy God" (ver. 13); and the caution never to allow it to be lacking, seems to guard against the danger of supposing, that our gifts to the Lord can find acceptance in any other way than through the provisions of the covenant which He has made with us by sacrifice (Ps. l. 5). The things prohibited are equally suggestive with the things enjoined. They are leaven and honey: leaven, the symbol of corruption, and honey, of a sweetness which was in the Hebrew mind especially associated with fermentation.

The disposal of the offering was also significant. Part of it was to be burnt upon the altar "as a memorial" (ver. 2, 6); the rest was set apart for use by the priests (ver. 3). Inasmuch as the priests in these transactions represented the people, while the altar represented God, the idea of fellowship or sharing is here conveyed, as if to suggest the thought that while all our energies and all our substance should be consecrated to God in the first place, the sum is nevertheless in the issue divided between the more sacred and the more personal uses. In the matter of property, for instance, the true idea is not to give a portion to the Lord and to keep the rest

for ourselves, but to give all to God; and then, with His approval to expend so much on personal use, and set aside so much for consumption on the altar. But while the offering is to be thus divided, the frankincense is to be all burnt upon the altar (ver. 2). The devotional element is for God alone. You have heard, perhaps, of the newspaper writer who, referring to the devotional part of the service in one of the churches in Boston, spoke of his having had the privilege of listening to "the most eloquent prayer that was ever addressed to a Boston audience." We are too apt to forget that our prayers are not for Boston audiences or London audiences, but for the audience of Heaven, for the ear of God. The frankincense was *all* to be burnt upon the altar.

3. It remains to consider *the Peace-offering* (Lev. iii., vii. 28–34).* As the name implies, the prominent thought in these sacrifices was the blessed result of drawing near to God in the way of His appointment. "Justified by faith, we have *peace* with God." In the sin-offering there was forgiveness, in the burnt-offering acceptance, in the meat-offering consecration, and now in the peace-offering there is peace and joy, peace with God and joy in the Holy Ghost, the supreme satisfaction of the soul in that communion with God which has been established through the appointed sacrifices. Here, as always, there is the idea of atonement underlying all; for in these sacrifices, as well as in the others, there was

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* The "laws" of the different offerings, beginning at chapter vi. 8, seem to be supplementary directions to the priests. In the case of the peace-offering these are of special importance.

the killing of the animal, the laying of the hand upon its head, and the sprinkling of the blood; and not only so, but the new offering had to be laid "upon the burnt sacrifice which is upon the wood that is on the fire" (ver. 5), viz., the perpetual burnt-offering of the morning and evening sacrifice. But though care is taken, as heretofore, to keep before the view of the worshipper his entire dependence for all the blessings which he enjoys, upon the atonement provided by the Lord, yet the characteristic features are found later on, in the disposition of the parts. This was the only sacrifice in which there was a distribution all around, so to speak: part to the altar, part to the officiating priest, part to the family of the priesthood, part to the worshipper and his family, and the remains, if any, given to the poor. It was essentially a festal sacrifice, the idea of joyful communion shining out in it.

The details of the distribution seem quite significant also. The choicest and most inward parts belonged to the altar, and were to be burned upon it, which seems to indicate that our deepest emotions of gratitude and love should ascend to God. Then, after the inward parts had been thus removed, the best of what remained went to "Aaron and his sons," after having been "waved" to the Lord; and when we remember that the priesthood represented God on the one hand and the people on the other, we see how strikingly the conception of communion was conveyed in this part of the ritual. Then, while the general priesthood occupied a position of mediation between God and the people, the officiating priest occupied for the time the position of mediator between God

and the worshipper, and accordingly the best of what remained, viz., the right shoulder, was assigned to him, after having been "heaved" to the Lord, as the other had been waved. The appropriateness of *waving* (*i. e.*, with a horizontal motion towards the tabernacle), in the first instance, and of *heaving* (*i. e.*, with a vertical motion, as if to place upon the altar) in the other, will be seen when we remember that the high-priest, who was specially in view in the waving, had the privilege of going into the most holy place, towards which the offering was waved, whereas the officiating priest had for his special duty simply the placing of the sacrifice upon the altar. In each case the ceremony meant to convey the Divine participation in the joy of the occasion. Then, if the burning of the inwards upon the altar may be rightly interpreted as signifying the consecration of our deepest feelings to the Lord, we need not think it too fanciful to find in the wave breast and heave shoulder, that were given to the priests, the consecration of heart and hand to the service of God in His sanctuary; while the enjoyment of the remainder by the worshipper showed the large participation which he has in the abounding joy of the occasion, a joy which may flow over so as to bless those who are not so richly privileged as himself.

The caution not to allow any to remain over till the morning, seems to suggest that the enjoyment of spiritual blessings must always be kept closely associated with the sacrifices on the ground of which they are enjoyed. Even in our times of richest spiritual enjoyment, and then perhaps especially, we have need to present the prayer: "Saviour, keep me near the cross." Each time

the table is spread for us in the presence of our enemies, we must approach it by the way of the altar.

And now, is not even this hasty survey of the different offerings sufficient to convince us of their exceeding value as an educating power in Israel, leading the truly devout amongst the people to an intense hatred of sin, and thorough, hearty, and happy consecration to God?

What a complete and orderly system of saving truth, beginning with the exceeding evil of sin, and ending with the surpassing joys of fellowship with God, the bridge between the two being found in the successive presentation of atonement (in the sin-offering), satisfaction (in the trespass-offering), and justification as the result, followed by dedication and acceptance (in the burnt-offering), consecration and sanctification (in the bread-offering), the climax of all being reached in the sacred and heavenly joy symbolized in the peace-offering. Ah, verily, there was far more of true value for the world in the Hebrew ritual of the altar than in all Greek philosophy or classic art. There was in it, there is in it still, when read not in "the letter which killeth," but according to "the spirit which giveth life," a mighty power that makes for righteousness.

III. HOW CHRIST FULFILLED THE RITUAL OF THE ALTAR.

So far, we have been considering the symbolic meaning of the sacrifices which were offered on the altar in the court, a meaning which would be more obvious to the Hebrews than it can be to us. But before passing from the subject, it will be necessary to consider their typical meaning, the relation which they sustained, as

germs or buds, to the flower and fruit of "the truth as it is in Jesus." Inasmuch as we who live in these later days have in this department an advantage over those who lived under the old covenant, our best plan will be to shift our point of view; so that, instead of looking at the sacrifices and asking how they typified Christ, we shall look at Christ and ask how He fulfilled them.

One of our Lord's earliest utterances when He entered on His ministry was this: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." And again, "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." It follows, then, that inasmuch as the sacrifices of the altar have passed away, it must have been not by simple abrogation, but by fulfilment; and therefore we are entitled to ask how it was that they were fulfilled. This inquiry would not have been a very difficult one, if we had had only the life of Christ to guide us; but it is much simplified by the light thrown upon the subject throughout the Epistles, and most of all in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the relations of the old to the new covenant are specifically treated.

The *locus classicus* on the subject is Hebrews x. 1–14. The entire passage is of great importance, but in the eighth and ninth verses, especially, we have the gateway into the whole territory which we wish to explore: "Above when He [Christ] said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt-offerings and offering for sin Thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; then said He, Lo, I come to do Thy will,

O God." These words are quoted from the fortieth Psalm. They were originally the words of David, who was the Lord's anointed (*i.e.*, the Christ) of the time, and in their prophetical import were fulfilled when Christ came into the world: "Wherefore *when He cometh into the world*, He saith, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." Here Christ is represented as taking the place of the Old Testament sacrifices, as He entered on the great work He had to do for man upon the earth. But while all the sacrifices are in prospect, that which is immediately in view is *the burnt-offering*, which was, as we have seen, the old original sacrifice from which the others were offshoots. The idea, you will see, is the central idea of dedication: "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God." Here, then, we have, in that spirit of dedication with which the Lord Jesus entered upon His work, laying Himself as it were on the altar for us from the very outset, the fulfilment of the burnt-offering as set forth in Leviticus i. And hence the appropriateness with which John the Baptist, at the very outset, pointed Him out in these terms, referring, we believe, chiefly to the burnt-offering of the morning and evening sacrifice: "Behold the Lamb of God!"

The burnt-offering, we have seen, was followed by a *meat-offering* (bread-offering). The symbolical meaning of this we found to be that the dedication of self was followed by the consecration of all the energies to God. And accordingly we find the Lord Jesus wholly devoted in all His energies to the great work for which He laid Himself upon the altar, so that He could say: "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish

His work" (John iv. 34). And just as the memorial of the bread-offering was divided between the altar, which represented God, and the priests, who represented the people, so we find that later on Christ speaks of Himself as the "Bread of God" and "the Bread of Life," offered upon the altar of God in the one character, and in the other ministered to His people for their sustenance: "He that eateth Me, the same shall live by Me" (John vi. 33, 57). And so, throughout the entire life of consecration which our Saviour led, a life which was first offered up to God upon the altar, and besides is communicated to us that we may share in it, we have the fulfilment of the bread-offering of Leviticus ii.

Later on in His ministry, the delightful thoughts of *the peace-offering* come into prominence, viz., peace and joy and blessed communion. The whole atmosphere of the peace-offering is diffused throughout those sacred chapters in John (xiii.–xvii.), where we have the record of the closest communion, first of the disciples with their Master, and then of the Master Himself with the Father in heaven. There we have the institution of the Sacred Feast which, while connected historically with the Passover, is in its spirit and associations most closely linked with the peace-offering, and accordingly is appropriately called "the Eucharist" (chap. xiii.) There we find the gracious benediction, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (chap. xiv.) There, too, we hear Him saying: "These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your

joy might be full" (chap. xv.) There, also, He gives the assurance that though there must be the pang of parting from Himself, yet in a little while the Comforter will come to remain with them for ever, bringing a joy that shall be abiding and full (chap. xvi.) And there, above all, He pours out His whole soul in prayer for that unity of fellowship, which the peace-offering so beautifully symbolized between the Holy Father, the Priest, and the people: "that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us" (chap. xvii.) There, there, is the fulfilment of the peace-offering in Leviticus iii.

And now the time has come that *the sin-offering* must be presented. He, who from the beginning has "given Himself for us, as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. v. 2), must now, though "He knew no sin," "become sin for us." And so, in a painfully literal sense, the sacrifice is bound upon the altar. Not the old altar of burnt-offering that stood in the court, for that would have limited, or seemed to limit, the atonement to those who had a position of special privilege within the sacred precincts.

"There is a green hill far away, *without the city wall,*
Where our dear Lord was crucified, who died to save *us all.*"

The cross was an altar for the world. And there was an additional significance in its being outside the city, as is shown in that very striking passage in Hebrews xiii. 10–12: "We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle. For the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the

high-priest for sin, are burned without the camp. Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate." There was the fulfilment of the sin-offering in Leviticus iv. And of the trespass-offering too (Lev. v. vi.); for that precious life was given as a ransom for us, "a ransom for all" (1 Tim. ii. 6).

In the ritual of the sin-offering, one of the regulations was this: "Where *the ashes* are poured out, there shall he be burnt" (Lev. iv. 12). And in the law of the burnt-offering it was ordained that the ashes should be carried without the camp to *a clean place* (Lev. vi. 11). May not these have been in the mind of the Evangelist when he tells us that the place where the Lord was crucified was called "the place of a skull" (John xix. 17); and (after all was over), "now in the place where He was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre [a place of ashes too, but a 'clean place' notwithstanding] wherein was never man yet laid. *There* laid they Jesus."

"At length the worst is o'er, and Thou art laid
Deep in Thy darksome bed;
All still and cold beneath yon dreary stone
Thy sacred form is gone;
Around those lips where power and mercy hung,
The dews of death have clung;
The dull earth o'er Thee, and Thy foes around,
Thou sleep'st a silent corse, in funeral fetters wound."

Here we part company with the typical meaning of the Sacrifices. They leave the victim in the place of

ashes. But though He died as our Sacrifice, He lives as our great High-priest, and when we pass to the next department of the ritual, we shall find Him carrying the blood into the holy place for us.

Meantime we must not leave the subject of the ritual of the altar, without a word in conclusion as to the fulfilment of the sacrifices which is required of us. In the Epistle to the Hebrews, after presenting Christ as the sin-offering, these earnest, practical words are added: "By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to His name. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased" (Heb. xiii. 15, 16). There is no sin-offering required of us now. "It is finished." "By one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." But thank-offerings we should present continually, and votive offerings, in the spirit of the 116th Psalm. And not only so, but we should present ourselves as a whole burnt-offering. "Ye are not your own: ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God with your bodies and with your spirits, which are His."

No more appropriate close to the great subject of the ritual of the altar could be imagined, than that grand benediction with which the subject is closed in the epistle from which we have quoted so much: "Now may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect [there is the ark, there is the law, there is the

goál of HOLINESS which must ever be full in the view of the worshipper at the altar] in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

XII.

RITUAL OF THE HOLY PLACE.

LEVITICUS VIII.–X.

AS the altar in the court was the place of worship for the people, the first or outer apartment of the Tabernacle was the place of worship for the priests. None else had the right to enter within the door; but it was the duty of the priests day by day to go into the Holy Place to trim and furnish the lamps of the golden candlestick, and burn incense upon the golden altar; and week by week to replenish the bread upon the golden table. From this it follows that the subject of the priesthood belongs especially to the ritual of the Holy Place. It is true that the services of the priests were necessary in order to offer sacrifices upon the altar of burnt-offering in the court; but these services were of an entirely different order from those which were rendered in the Holy Place, and accordingly it is not until after the ritual of the altar is concluded that we have the account of the consecration of the priests (chap. viii. ix.)

The Holy Place being a part of the Tabernacle or tent of God, to enter it was to enter the house of God, to hold personal communion with Him—not of the most intimate kind, for even after the Holy Place was en-

tered, there was the veil drawn across the entrance to the inner chamber where was the Mercy-Seat, the throne of God. But though the veil still closed the entrance to the Holiest of all, there was true communion with God to be enjoyed in the Holy Place; and the greatness of the privilege was symbolized, first in the magnificence of the apartment, with its gleaming colours and its burning gold, and then in the significance of the table on which was spread "the bread of the presence," of the lamp with its seven lights which never went out, and of the sweet incense which rose from the golden altar.

All this was for Israel, or why should it be there? And yet how could Israel enjoy it? "Without holiness no man can see the Lord." How then can Israel that is unholy be allowed to enter? The priesthood was the solution of the problem. It is true that the priests were not really holy, any more than the people were; but they were symbolically holy; and thus in symbol the truth was constantly kept before the eyes of all—that only holy people can enter the Holy Place.

It is most important to bear in mind, in dealing with the subject now before us, that the priests were the representatives of the people. When the priest received the sacrifice for the altar at the hand of the worshipper in the court, he acted as the representative of God; but when he entered the Holy Place, it was as the representative of the people. So far as the priests themselves were concerned personally, they were in no better position in things pertaining to God than the rest of the people; and hence it was only in their official capacity as representatives of the entire congregation that they

entered the door of the Tabernacle. And accordingly they dare not enter it except in certain vestments and after certain ceremonies, which were all intended to invest with a symbolic holiness those who should as representatives of Israel enter the Holy Place. So that, when the congregation of Israel saw a priest, clothed in white robes, after offering a sacrifice on the altar and washing hands and feet at the laver before the door, entering the Holy Place, where were the table and the candlestick and the golden altar, they were taught the precious truth that there was a way open for them, through sacrifice and by washing, of entering with the white robes of holiness into the presence of the Most High, there to sit at His table, rejoice in His light, and worship at His altar.

We are now prepared for looking intelligently at the impressive service before us. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take Aaron and his sons with him (1), and the garments (2), and the anointing oil (3), and a bullock for the sin-offering, and two rams, and a basket of unleavened bread (4); and gather thou all the congregation together unto the door of the tabernacle" (viii. 1, 2). The congregation are to be gathered, for it is as their representatives that the priests are to be set apart. Their attention is directed to the door of the Tabernacle, for it is for the purpose of opening that door to them that the ceremonies of consecration are held.

And now, in considering the services, we shall follow the order indicated above in the directions given to Moses, which will give us (1) the separation of Aaron

and his sons, (2) their investiture, (3) their anointing, and (4) the sacrifices of consecration.

I. THE SEPARATION OF AARON AND HIS SONS.

We are already familiar with the use that has been made of *separation* in the third age to inculcate the absolute necessity of holiness in order to intercourse with God. Abraham was separated from an idolatrous and wicked world, to be the head of a family and a nation that should be holy to the Lord; and accordingly, in comparison with the heathen world Israel as a whole was a priesthood, as is set forth in Exodus xix. 6: "Ye shall be unto Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Observe now how the same principle is further carried out. From the entire nation one tribe, the tribe of Levi, is set apart to be, above all the others, holy unto the Lord. From the tribe of Levi, one family, that of Aaron, is set apart to be, above all the other families of the tribe, holy unto the Lord. And finally, from the family of Aaron a single individual, the high-priest, is set apart to be, above all the other members of the family, holy unto the Lord. The washing with water (ver. 6) led the mind still farther in the same direction.

The effect of this on the minds of the people may perhaps be illustrated in this way. Suppose you wish to give the idea of perfectly pure water to some person who has never seen it, and you have no means of showing him the genuine article. By taking water in different degrees of impurity, and leading him to look at the different specimens, beginning with that which is most impure and going on to that which is least, you will at

all events set his mind in the direction of the conception which you wish him to attain. And in the same way, though there was no way open of showing Israel at this time a genuine specimen of that holiness without which no man can see the Lord, yet by these successive separations of officially (or if you choose, artificially) holy persons, the mind of Israel was set in the direction of that holiness up to which the Lord was educating them. It must be remembered that they had the moral law to help them to translate the symbolical holiness into the reality, of which it was the mere expression in language addressed to the eye.

While Aaron and his sons *represented* Israel, they *typified* Christ and His Church. The high-priest was the type of Christ Himself, as we shall see more particularly when we come to the investiture. The priests, the sons of Aaron, typified those who, on account of their relationship to Christ, are admitted into the family of God, and enjoy all the privileges of His house. It is an entire mistake to apply the term "priest" to the ministers of Christ under the new covenant. There is not a single passage in the New Testament to justify it, or give any colour to it, while again and again we are reminded that all true disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ are "priests unto God."

II. THE INVESTITURE.

We use the word in its strictly etymological sense. It was by the putting on of the appointed *garments* that Aaron and his sons were invested with office. The investiture of the high-priest comes first (ver. 7–9). The order in which the garments are mentioned both

here and in Exodus xxix., where the directions for this service are given, is the order of convenience in putting them on, beginning with the inner garments and ending with those that were put on last. It will probably be better for us to follow the order of Exodus xxviii., which, being the order of revelation, is more likely to be significant; and besides, the account there is fuller than anywhere else.

First in order comes the Ephod, with its "curious girdle," and the onyx stones upon its shoulder-pieces (Exod. xxviii. 6–14). The ephod was the distinctive priestly garment (see 1 Sam. ii. 28). It hung upon the shoulders down to the waist, and was formed of the most costly and beautiful materials, corresponding exactly to those employed in the interior decoration of the Holy Place. The girdle was made of the same materials, with the same combination of colours. As garments were associated in the Hebrew mind with character, and the girdle with energy in work, we find in the correspondence of both with the interior of the Holy Place, a memorial of the necessity that those who enter the house of the Lord must be themselves holy and beautiful in character, and be engaged in high and holy service. But the most important part of the ephod were the shoulder-pieces, on which were set two onyx stones, with the names of the tribes engraven on them, six on the one and six on the other; and (ver. 12) "Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord upon his two shoulders for a memorial." Here we have the idea of representation most clearly and beautifully symbolized. The shoulders, to a Hebrew mind, were the symbol of

strength; and the idea was, that when the high-priest entered the Holy Place, he did not go alone, but carried with him on his strong shoulders the children of Israel, whom he represented; and the estimation in which the people were held was expressed in the value of the precious stones on which the names were engraved, and the setting of pure gold with which they were surrounded.

The Breastplate comes next (ver. 15-30), on which were set in gold twelve different precious stones; and on these again were engraven the names of the twelve children of Israel; and (ver. 29) "Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgment *upon his heart*, when he goeth in into the holy place, for a memorial before the Lord continually." Not only on his shoulders, the seat of strength, but on his heart, the seat of love. And just as the use of the same stone for all on the shoulder-pieces symbolized the unity of the people, the use of the different stones in the breastplate symbolized the diversity in unity and taught the delightful truth, that not only the children as an entire family, but each separate child, with all its individual peculiarities, is affectionately remembered in the holy and beautiful house of the Lord.

The Urim and Thummim (ver. 30) which were to be "put in the breastplate" are not described, and therefore we cannot tell with certainty what form the representation took. The words mean "lights and perfection"; and inasmuch as the idea of guidance is regularly associated with the Urim and Thummin, the thought seems clear enough. "Lights" will mean that heavenly guid-

ance which comes as a good and perfect gift from "the Father of lights," and "perfection," the glory to which the guidance leads. It is not at all unlikely, then, that the Urim and Thummin was some symbolic representation of the Law. It was by the Law, as a heavenly *light*, that Israel was guided, and it was to that *perfection* of holiness which is the fulfilling of the Law, that their feet were to be constantly turned. The Law, as "perfection," gave them the *direction* in which they must travel; as "lights," it kept them from diverging to the right hand or to the left, as they journeyed on from day to day. "The path of the just is as the shining light (the Urim) that shineth more and more unto the perfect day" (the Thummin). "Thou shall guide me by Thy counsel (Urim), and afterwards receive me to Thy glory" (Thummin).

If we are correct in supposing that the Urim and Thummin meant some symbolic representation of the Law, it is quite likely that those are correct who think that the twelve precious stones were arranged round the Urim and Thummin, very much as the children of Israel were arranged in camp around the Tabernacle, the centre of which we have seen was the Law deposited in the ark. And inasmuch as the word "judgment" is very frequently used to designate the Law, we may have in this a full explanation of verse 30: "And thou shalt put in the breastplate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be upon Aaron's heart, when he goeth in before the Lord: and *Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually.*"

Following the breastplate is the Robe of the ephod, with its hem (ver. 31–35). This was a long robe, worn under the ephod, and appearing below it. It was all of blue, the heavenly colour, as was the cloth which covered the ark when it was carried on the priests' shoulders in sight of the people (Num. iv. 5, 6). Chief attention is directed to its hem, which consisted of a fringe adorned with bells and pomegranates alternately, the bells being of gold, and the pomegranates of the other characteristic colours of the interior of the Holy Place. The pomegranate was the queen fruit of Palestine. It was large and full of innumerable seeds, and was therefore the best emblem of that fruitfulness which is expected of those who are privileged to live in communion with God. The bells are significant of joy, and of that communication of blessing to others which is characteristic of the priestly office. It is probably to the ringing of the golden bells on the hem of the high-priest's robe that reference is made in such a passage as Psalm lxxxix. 15: "Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound."

Lastly, the Mitre, with its plate of pure gold, on which was inscribed, "Holiness to the Lord" (ver. 36–38). In the high-priest's garments, as in the Tabernacle itself, the culmination of all is in "holiness to the Lord." "Holiness to the Lord" was the sum of the ten commandments graven on stone, and deposited in the ark of the covenant; and now it must also be graven in gold, set in a setting of heaven's purest azure (ver. 37), and displayed upon the forehead of the high-priest; and here again the representative character of Aaron is distinctly

brought out: "it shall be always on HIS forehead that THEY may be accepted before the Lord" (ver. 38).

And now let me enumerate the main ideas which are symbolized in the vestments of the high-priest. The ephod with its girdle signified the *beautiful character* and the *exalted service* which are becoming to the Holy Place; and the shoulder-pieces and the breastplate, with the precious stones and the engraving on them, signified that the children of Israel as a whole and each child individually, was borne on the strong shoulders and carried in the warm heart of their representative in the presence of the Lord, giving the conceptions of *strength to sustain* and *love to cherish;* the Urim and Thummim added the thought of *heavenly guidance* along a path that "shineth more and more unto the perfect day"; the pomegranates and bells on the blue robe of the ephod symbolized heavenly *fruitfulness and joy;* while the climax of all was reached in the golden graving of *holiness unto the Lord.* You see how rich was the symbolism of the high-priestly vestments.

And how expressive as types of the glory and the grace of our great High-Priest. The Lord Jesus needed no priestly vestments; for He had the great realities, of which these were only the symbols. He really possessed the lovely character which was only symbolized in the ephod; and no "curious girdle" was needed to make it evident that it was a high and holy work in which He was engaged. His strength to save, and His love for lost sinners were so conspicuous all through His strong and loving life, that onyx stones upon His shoulders or precious stones upon His breast would have been super-

fluous. No symbol of Urim and Thummim was needed for One who could say: "I am the Light of the world; He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." Nor were bells and pomegranates needful on that garment hem, the very touching of which, in the spirit of trembling faith, brought health to a cheek that for twelve years had been pale, and joy to a heart that, after every remedy had been tried in vain, had bidden farewell to hope (Luke viii. 43, 44). And why should there be a plate of gold with "holiness to the Lord" inscribed upon it, on the forehead of One who could fearlessly issue the challenge: "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?"—One who was really, as the other was only symbolically, "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners"? Verily, in a far higher sense is it true of Him than it was of Aaron, that "holiness unto the Lord" is "*always on His forehead, that we may be accepted before the Lord.*"

Very little is said about the garments of the *priests* (ver. 40–42). The attention is concentrated on the high-priest. The beauty and the glory, the strength and the grace, the love and the joy, are all *His*. To Him we must look for them all. And yet the priests have their vestments, too, "for glory and for beauty" (ver. 40). They were "of fine linen, clean and white," which symbolized "the righteousness of the saints" (Rev. xix. 8). It is for the sake of our great High-Priest that we are accepted first (v. 38); but after we have been accepted, and through Him have become priests to God, new garments are put upon us; and a share in the glory of the high-priestly work is added, which also finds its striking

symbol in the fact that, while the rest of the priestly garments were simply white, the girdle, which as we have seen was the symbol of service, was of the various colours that adorned the interior of the Holy Place.

It will be very manifest from our study of this subject, that nothing could be more presumptuous than the arrogation of the priestly office by any privileged order now, and nothing more out of place than the display of priestly garments. We have already remarked that there is not a word in the New Testament to give colour to the claim of any other priesthood than that which is enjoyed by all Christians, who have now through Christ been made priests unto God ; and now it will be very apparent that the use of priestly garments is not only unjustifiable, but must be utterly confusing and misleading to those who are encouraged to attach the slightest importance to such things.

The priestly garments of the Old Testament were prophetic. They set forth in symbol important truths concerning the person and work of the great High-Priest who was to come. But now that He has come and fulfilled all the types and symbols, it is manifest that to revive them is only to obscure the glory of Him in whom they are fulfilled. It was all very well for those who had not the reality to prize the shadows ; but for those who have the substance to grasp the shadows is childish and foolish in the extreme. And it is all the less excusable that the Apostles were so careful to warn us against this very childishness. It was for this purpose that the Epistle to the Galatians was written. They were showing a tendency to go back to the old ritualism

of the Law; and it is to warn them of their danger that the apostle addresses them in such earnest words as these: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" "Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh?" "How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" One would almost think the words were directly addressed to the ritualists of the nineteenth century. And the same warnings are ever appearing in other epistles, as for example in that to the Colossians: "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him: rooted and built up in Him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And *ye are complete in Him*" (ii. 6–10). "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High-Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus"; and as He wore no priestly robes Himself, but stood forth before God and man in the unspotted garments of His own perfect holiness, so let us, putting our trust in Him, reposing our confidence on those qualities and powers of His of which the priestly vestments of old were but a feeble prophecy, seek to be invested, not with robes which a milliner can make, but with that "fine linen, clean and white, which is *the righteousness of the saints*." Thus, and thus only, under the dispensation of the Spirit, can we find acceptance with God.

III. THE ANOINTING.

The ceremony of anointing follows the same order as the investiture, viz., Aaron first (Lev. viii. 12), and his sons later on (ver. 30). The meaning of the anointing is unmistakable, for throughout the Scriptures oil is the familiar and consistent symbol of Divine grace; and as the Holy Spirit is the fountain of Divine grace, the anointing is symbolical of His gracious work (see, as an example of this, Zech. iv.) The composition of "the holy anointing oil" (Exod. xxx. 22–33) was such as to indicate most expressively the variety and excellence of the Holy Spirit's working. While, then, the separation and cleansing signified putting off the old, and the investiture putting on the new, the anointing meant the consecration of the new man by the effusion of the Holy Spirit's grace.

So far the symbolic meaning. But the typical significance is that which arrests the attention here. At this point even the dullest mind amongst the ancient Hebrews would see a prophecy of better things to come, for was not the Hope of Israel known especially as the Messiah, the *Anointed One?* And for the same reason the very slowest among modern Christians to believe what Moses and the prophets taught of the coming Christ, will not venture to reject as fancy what the anointing has to tell concerning the Anointed One, the Christ of God. All the Evangelists tell us that after His baptism (which signified His separation to the work He had come to do, and corresponds to the washing, ver. 6, in the consecration of the priests), the "Holy Ghost descended and abode upon Him"; and one of

them tells us that in opening His ministry in the place where He had been brought up, He introduced Himself on this wise: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor" (Luke iv. 18).

And now we are in a position for understanding what at first sight seems a strange confusion in the narrative before us. Why is it that such a peculiar order is followed? We should naturally have expected that at the proper stage in the ceremony, Aaron and his sons would have been called up, and anointed, Aaron first of course, and his sons immediately after. But no. First, Aaron comes forward alone, and is anointed alone. Then there is a long interval, during which the sacrifices were offered on the altar, and the blood of the atoning sacrifice applied (Lev. viii. 24); and then, not till then, are Aaron's sons called up, and anointed (ver. 30). Whether the intelligent Jews of the time saw any significance in this peculiar arrangement we cannot tell; but to us who have the New Testament before us, there appears a striking appropriateness in it all. As we have seen more than once already, Aaron was the type of the great High-Priest of the new covenant, and Aaron's sons of all believers, who on account of their family relationship are now made priests to God. And when we look at the anointing respectively of the High-Priest Himself and His "children" (see Heb. ii. 13), we observe that it followed exactly the order of the old ceremony of consecration as recorded in Leviticus viii. First, Christ Himself was anointed alone, and the Spirit was given without measure (John iii. 34) to Him—"poured," as it is in the

ceremony here (ver. 12), so as to pervade the entire person, going down even to the skirts of the garments (Ps. cxxx.) This took place, as we have seen, at His baptism. Then a long interval elapsed, during which "the Holy Spirit was not yet given" to the disciples (John vii. 39). In the course of that interval Christ fulfilled all the offerings, as we have seen in our study of the ritual of the altar, and the blood of the atoning sacrifice was sprinkled upon the disciples, evidence of which we have in the fact that they were all found waiting with one accord in one place, ears attent, hands ready, feet willing (ver. 24); and then the anointing came, the Holy Ghost fell upon them, not without measure as in the case of the Master Himself, but copiously, the difference being significantly expressed in the ceremony of consecration by the use of the word "sprinkling" in the anointing of Aaron's sons (verse 30), while "pouring" was, as we have seen, the expression used in reference to the high-priest himself.

There is still another quite significant difference. In the case of the high-priest, the holy anointing oil, pure and simple, was used, whereas in the case of "the sons," the oil was used along with the blood which was upon the altar. Jesus Christ needed no atonement for Himself. The Spirit was given to Him directly, and as it were in His own right. But to those who through Him were called to be sons of God, the Spirit was given on the ground of the atonement which had been made for them; hence the use of the blood from the altar along with the holy anointing oil. Hence also the association of Aaron with the second anointing. The sons of Aaron

were anointed "*with him*," which suggests the truth that it is only by association with Christ that His disciples can receive "the unction from above." Without Him, nothing; "with Him," all.

IV. THE SACRIFICES.

Here, again, to a superficial reader the sacrifices seem complicated, if not confused; but a very little careful attention will show the orderliness and clear significance of the prolonged sacrificial ceremony. It extended over eight days, the length of time indicating the solemnity of the occasion. During seven of these days Moses acted as priest. It will be remembered that Moses, as mediator of the old covenant, united all the different offices in his own person. Up to this time he has acted not only as the leader and law-giver, but also as the priest, offering sacrifices and interceding for the people. It is he therefore, as a matter of course, who presides in the consecration of the priests.

The sacrifices of the first day are detailed in Leviticus viii. 14–29. After what has been said on the ritual of the altar, no explanation is necessary. The usual order is followed, viz.: first the sin-offering, then the burnt-offering, and finally the peace-offering; only, to mark the special occasion, instead of an ordinary peace-offering, there is a special consecration-offering, accompanied with the significant ceremony of touching with its blood the right ear and hand and foot of Aaron and his sons (ver. 23, 24). Thus the three great stages of the first day's ritual were atonement, dedication, consecration, followed by the feasting which was the usual sequel of the peace-offering (ver. 31, 32). Then there was a six

days' waiting on the Lord, during which there would appear to have been offered a daily sin-offering. This we gather from Exodus xxix. (ver. 35–37), where there are full directions given for this consecration service; and it will be seen by a comparison of the orders given in Exodus with the fulfilment of them in Leviticus, that the directions were followed to the minutest detail in all the different ceremonies of investiture, of anointing, of consecration. This repetition of the sin-offering every day gave special emphasis to the fundamental necessity of atonement in order to the opening of the Holy Place to the priests of God.

On the eighth day (chap. ix.) Aaron steps forward and takes his place at the altar, and offers a series of sacrifices, first for himself (ver. 2–14), and then for the people (ver. 15–21), the series for the people embracing all the offerings, except the trespass-offering, which from its very nature would not have been appropriate at the outset. There was sin to be atoned for; but as yet there was no "trespass" for which restitution should be made. The presentation of the entire series (sin-offering, burnt-offering, meat-offering, peace-offering with the wave-offering and heave-offering) may be compared with a similar transaction at the time of the ratification of the covenant with Abraham, when he was directed to offer, and did offer, all the different kinds of animals appropriate for sacrificial purposes (Gen. xv. 9, 10). In this way the greatness of the occasion was marked, and to the mind directed to the great Sacrifice of the new covenant, the thought was suggested that it required them all to unite their varying witness to give any conception of the fulness of

adaptation to all the wants of sinful man which would be found in that one Sacrifice.

And now that the priesthood has been separated, cleansed, invested with robes of "glory and beauty," anointed and fully consecrated, the Holy Place is opened for the representatives of Israel. "And Moses and Aaron [the mediator and the priest] went into the tabernacle of the congregation" (ver. 23). Moses, as representative of God, had been in before. But it was the first time that Aaron had entered. It was the first time the people had been represented there. For, you must remember, Aaron enters with the onyx stones upon his shoulders and the gems upon his breast. On his shoulder and on his breast he carries with him all the tribes of Israel into the Holy Place; and there he finds on his right the table with the bread of the presence upon it, on his left the golden candlestick with its seven lights, in front of him the golden altar with sweet incense rising from it before God. On his right hand, Life; on his left hand, Light; before him, Love; and only a veil, a thin veil, between him and the Throne of God.

Well may he bless the people when he comes out (ver. 22); and well may the glory of the Lord appear, and fire fall from heaven upon the altar (ver. 23); for now those "who were afar off are brought nigh" by the blood of atonement. Now, those who but a short time before dwelt in darkness and terror and in the very shadow of death (Exod. xix. 16–22), are admitted, through their representative, into the house of the Lord, where for darkness they have light; for death, life; and for

terror, everlasting love; and instead of "bounds" to warn them off from a region, the very touching of which was death (Exod. xix. 12, 13), there is a lovely veil, to hide from unprepared eyes the surpassing glory of the inner shrine,—a veil which is manifestly only for a time; and when it is removed, the scattered rays of truth and love, which have been shining from the table and the lamp and the golden altar, shall all be united into one dazzling glory of Life and Light and Love for evermore.

Observe, as a practical matter, that it was only through their representative priest that the Holy Place was open to the people. So is it still. It is only through Christ that we can draw near to God, only through Him that that we can feast on the bread of life, walk in the light of life, and join in those devotions which were symbolized in the sweet incense that ascended from the golden altar. But through Him we may come with all holy boldness: "having a high-priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Heb. x. 21, 22).

And yet for this reason we must be exceedingly careful not to "sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth" (ver. 26), for, if we do, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." This is strikingly and fearfully illustrated in the case of Nadab and Abihu, recorded in chapter x. Theirs was a most aggravated sin. They were the eldest sons of Aaron. They had enjoyed special advantages. They had been

privileged to go up with the seventy elders of Israel tc the mount of God, and see something of His glory (Exod. xxiv.) And yet on the very first day, as it would seem, of their sacred service, they disregard the commandment of the Lord, and offer "strange fire" upon the altar. Possibly it was through strong drink that they were led so flagrantly to transgress, which will account for the absolute prohibition of it to the priesthood in this connection (ver. 8–11); but if so, this was not accepted as any excuse. They were destroyed by "fire from the Lord" (ver. 2). We are not to suppose, of course, that they were necessarily excluded from mercy in the world to come; but just as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira in the early days of the New Testament Church, so in the beginning of the Old Testament worship, it was necessary to make an example of those who would lightly transgress the commandments of the Lord, so that all the world might learn the lesson, "Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever." A similar impression is made by the scrupulous care that was taken to make sure that Eleazar and Ithamar, the other two sons of Aaron, had fulfilled their duty in regard to the sin-offering (ver. 12–20).

But while we seek to "have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear," remembering that "our God is a consuming fire" to the presumptuous sinner, let us not be at all afraid to avail ourselves of our privileges as priests to God, for our High-Priest is not one "that cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities"; and if only we come with true hearts, we are sure of a welcome in the holy place

of communion with God. Let us, like the priests of old, be found day by day in our Holy Place, feasting on the bread of life, walking in the light of God, and offering up continually the sweet incense of a holy devotion; and, like the priests too, let us week by week renew "the bread of the presence," availing ourselves of the precious opportunities of replenishing the store which the first day of the week affords (Lev. xxiv. 8); and though there still is a veil between us and "the Holiest of all," "whither our Forerunner has for us entered," and whither so many dear ones have already gone, it is only a veil; no black funeral pall, but a thin veil, through which there seem to shine the beautiful colours of heaven and the forms of angels (Exod. xxvi. 31); and presently it shall be drawn aside, and HE shall appear, and we also shall "appear with Him in glory" (Col. iii. 4), and see—

"Those angel faces smile,
Which we have loved long since, and lost awhile."

XIII.

RITUAL OF THE MOST HOLY PLACE.

LEVITICUS XI.–XXII.

THE Most Holy Place was entered only once a year, viz., on the great Day of Atonement; and therefore its ritual resolves itself into the ritual of that day, which is given in the sixteenth chapter; but the subjects taken up in the intervening chapters are of such a nature as to prepare the way for the solemnities of that occasion; while those which come after, up to the twenty-second, are such as naturally and appropriately follow; and therefore we may with advantage make the entire section the subject of a single lecture, the interest of which will centre in the entrance of the high-priest into the Most Holy Place.

Though one day only of the entire year was devoted to the Holy of Holies, that one was the day of days of all the year. We have already seen that the idea of atonement is the foundation-thought in all the sacrifices and in all the services, both in the ritual of the Altar and of the Holy Place. But while in all these services it has a fundamental place, yet it is so continually associated with other thoughts as to render it quite possible

that some of the people might fail to see its transcendent importance; and accordingly there was one day of the year, and that the most sacred of all, when the great fact of atonement was presented alone and in the most solemn manner before the minds of the people; and there was one department of the ritual, and that the most sacred of all, the ritual of the Holy of Holies, which was so arranged that the necessity and value of the atonement which God has provided for human sin should stand out in solitary grandeur, like the Matterhorn among Swiss mountains, before the eyes of Israel in the olden time, and of all God's Israel to the end of the world.

It will be seen, then, that it was specially appropriate that the minds of the people should be prepared for the solemn services of that most sacred day by the very strongest impressions of the exceeding evil of sin. To produce such impressions seems to be the main object of these intervening chapters (xi.–xv.) We shall find, when we look into them, that attention is first directed to the *evil* abounding *around* us, and then to the horrible nature of the *sin* which finds a place *within* us.

In the eleventh chapter directions are given for the distinction of animals into clean and unclean: the former being allowed for food, the latter absolutely forbidden, and not only so, but treated as "an abomination." There can be no doubt that there was a sanitary element in this distinction; but it is evident that this was not the main idea; for it is not "wholesome and unwholesome," but "*clean and unclean.*" It was not simply and solely a natural distinction, but also and mainly ceremo-

nial, one object of which undoubtedly was to help to keep Israel rigidly separate from other nations, as is plainly set forth in the twentieth chapter: "Ye shall therefore put difference between clean beasts and unclean . . . . for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be Mine" (ver. 25, 26). One of the great temptations which Israel had to encounter, was the tendency to get into too close relations with idolatrous nations; and we can readily see how these regulations as to diet put a barrier in the way. We know how similar restrictions operate in India to prevent the amalgamation of different castes; and just as it operates against the Gospel there, so did it in "the times of Israel" against the progress of idolatry. The connection between this distinction and the old exclusiveness of the Mosaic times is very clearly seen in the vision of Peter, recorded in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, where, by the command to disregard the old Mosaic distinctions as to clean and unclean beasts, he was given to understand that the old system of exclusiveness must now pass away, or to put it in his own words: "Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or to come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts x. 28).

But we must go deeper than this in order fully to understand the reason of the distinction. It is true that one object in view was to keep the Jews separate from other nations; but if this had been all, a quite arbitrary distinction would have been sufficient, and

would have even served the purpose more effectually than one that was founded, as this was, on nature.

There was in fact here, as everywhere else in the Mosaic ritual, a symbolical significance in the distinction. This is very apparent from the closing verses of the chapter before us, as well as many other scriptures to the same effect: "I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore *sanctify* yourselves, and ye shall be *holy;* for I am holy; neither shall ye *defile* yourselves with any manner of creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be *holy*, for I am holy." It is in fact still another lesson on the absolute necessity of HOLINESS.

We have seen how an Israelite could not at any moment of the day or night look towards the Tabernacle without being reminded that "without holiness no man can see the Lord." But that was not enough. The same great lesson must be written on the face of nature, so that he could not stir abroad in any direction without being reminded of it. The earth, the sea, the air, were all full of symbols which had been pressed into this great service. Already by the Mosaic teaching concerning the creation of all things by God, Who looking upon the work of His hands pronounced all very good, the devout Israelite had learned to see in all nature around him the glory and the goodness of God. But now that this distinction was made, a secondary lesson was added to the first, and he was taught in symbol to realize that though all the works of God were good, yet such was the deceitfulness of the human heart, that on all hands

there was danger of being tempted to evil, and so becoming contaminated and defiled; whence the need of constant watchfulness to keep themselves "unspotted from the world," and inasmuch as this in the absolute sense was clearly impossible, the need of such an atonement as was provided in the service of the great Atonement Day. In all this we are dealing simply with the general symbolic meaning of the distinction; but we believe that there are also specific lessons to be learned in such details as these, that amongst the unclean are classed all those animals whose habits are filthy, those that creep upon the earth, those that having wings are yet in the habit of walking on the earth, and even noble birds like the eagle, which, though emphatically a bird of freedom and of soaring flight, nevertheless is found, like too many of its kind among men, feeding upon carrion (Matt. xxiv. 28).

From the thought of *evil around* we are conducted in the chapters which follow (xii.–xv.) to *sin within*. First, as a *hereditary taint*, which seems to be the leading thought of the ritual prescribed in the twelfth chapter. "I was shapen in iniquity," writes the Psalmist, "and in sin did my mother conceive me." This thought, however, is comparatively lightly touched, and with much greater emphasis the attention is directed to the horrible nature of sin as a loathsome and dreadful *disease*. Those who are at all familiar with Bible thought do not need to be reminded that all diseases are represented as symptoms and symbols of the great disease of the soul. One single example, however, may be taken, to fix it in the mind. When the man sick of the palsy (Mark ii.) is

brought to the Saviour to be healed, how does He deal with the case? Does He address Himself at once to the cure of the palsy? No; He passes it by as a mere symptom, and penetrates to the central disease of the soul, pronouncing these words of sovereign healing, "Son, thy *sins* be forgiven thee." And when the by-standers murmured, He gave this most significant reply: "Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise. . . . . And immediately he arose." Does not this throw light on all our Saviour's works of healing? He came as "the great Physician," and He removed the outward symptoms not only for the sake of relieving these distressed ones, but also and chiefly for the sake of making it manifest to all, that He was able to deal effectually with the central disease of sin.

But, while all diseases were regarded as symptoms and symbols of sin, there was one disease above all others that was so regarded and treated. This was the dreadful disease of leprosy. It would be out of place to attempt to enter into the medical questions which arise in connection with this disease. But we must by all means say a word in correction of the still popular fallacy, that the stringent regulations of exclusion and non-intercourse were made to avoid the danger of contagion. There seems to be a general agreement now, that the leprosy of Palestine was not, could not have been characteristically contagious; and that therefore, though

there may have been a sanitary element in the ordinances which applied to it, just as there was in the distinction of animals into clean and unclean, yet here as well as there, they were properly ceremonial observances, the point and significance of which lay in the fact that to the Jewish mind the leprosy was an outward image, we might say *the* outward image, of sin. When we bear this in mind, we can discern many important lessons even in the details of the ritual for the leprosy (xiii. 1–46); and we can see a reason, besides the physical analogy which has been proved by recent microscopic science actually to exist, for treating the "dry rot" in garments (ver. 47–49), and in houses (xiv. 33–57), under the same head as leprosy on the person. Again and again in this book of Leviticus is the solemn lesson taught us, that sin is of such a nature as to pollute all it touches, so that our very surroundings become tainted by the impurity of our hearts and the iniquity of our lives (see Jude, ver. 23).

The way of cleansing the leper is interesting and significant (chap. xiv.) The main thoughts in the ritual are, first, atonement and purification under the familiar symbols of blood and water; and then death and resurrection under the striking emblems of the two birds, one killed, and the other allowed to fly away into its native heaven. It requires no stretch of fancy to see in this, what the Apostle John evidently saw when he wrote: "This is He that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood." His word was like the pure "running water" which had so prominent a place in the cleansing of the leper (see

Eph. v. 26, 27); but even that word of His, so full of instruction and consolation, was not enough; He must also give His life for us, fulfilling thus the type of the "bird alive and clean," that was "killed in an earthen vessel over the running water," so that the blood and the water were mingled together (see John xix. 34); a striking symbol of the fact that it is only when the power of the Cross is felt in the heart, that the words of the Saviour exert their purifying influence upon the life. "If a man love Me" (says Christ; and it is the sacrifice of the Cross that moves our love), "he will keep My words." And then, in the flight of the other bird with the blood of the sacrifice upon its wings (ver. 6), have we not a beautiful picture of the ascension of our Lord, carrying with Him to the heaven whither He has gone, the blood of His Sacrifice (Heb. ix. 12, 24), "there to appear in the presence of God for us"?

After all this, which the priest does for the leper, there are certain things which the leper himself must do, the general significance of which in the light of what has been said is so apparent that we need not enter into particulars (ver. 8–10). And for the same reason we may pass over the sacrifices and the anointing, which were prescribed with a view to his restoration to the full privileges of the sanctuary, the leading ideas being the same as those which have been already before our minds in the ritual of the altar and in the anointing of the priests (ver. 11–32).

In the fifteenth chapter the *defilement* of sin is the leading thought. Here again there can be no doubt that there was a sanitary element in the regulations. "Clean-

liness is next to Godliness" is not, as some suppose, a Bible sentence, but it is beyond all question a Bible sentiment. The first all-embracing law of the Mosaic economy is, *Be holy*. And the second is like unto it, *Be clean:* clean in person, clean in garments, clean in house, clean in camp, clean everywhere. Who can tell how much the world owes to these "health laws of Moses"? "It is certainly a curious thing," writes one who is an authority on the subject, "worthy the notice of every student of the progress of the human race, whether his standpoint be religious or purely scientific, that the moving camp in the wilderness was governed by as strict and perfect a sanitary code as any sanitary commission could now devise." But while in the Mosaic institutes we have evidence of an enlightened regard to the necessity of cleanliness in order to the health of the people, beyond even that which we, after so many centuries of progress, have yet reached, the purity of the soul was ever kept before the mind as the main thing to be desired and secured. "Our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience," was always the first thing; "our bodies washed with pure water," was the second (Heb. x. 22); and throughout the book of the Law these two have been by God so joined together, that no candid mind can put them asunder.

While this chapter is before us it may be well to refer to the objections of those who cavil at certain portions of Scripture because they are unfit to be read aloud in the family. It is freely admitted that there are portions of Scripture not at all adapted for this use. But that does not prove that their presence in the canon is uncalled for. That plain speaking and plain dealing, such

as we find in the book of Leviticus, was necessary, is amply proved by the history of the ancient world, and of the modern world too. The Bible is the only book that has exercised any considerable effect in keeping men and women pure. There are many books, where everything offensive to the ear is studiously avoided, which nevertheless are very poison to the soul. In the Bible, on the other hand, while there is not a little that is offensive to the ear, there is absolutely nothing that is poisonous to the spirit, unless the spirit has been poisoned already; for we must remember that while "to the pure all things are pure," "unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." There is absolutely nothing in the entire Bible that will not exert a holy and purifying influence on those who read it in the right spirit. And as a historical fact, such has been the result among those who have made these Scriptures their companion and counsellor. The Jews alone among the nations of antiquity had even the conception of purity as we understand it now. Consider for a moment, whence we derive those exalted notions of purity, which are widely prevalent in modern society, especially among Christian people. Did we get them from the Greeks? Even the purest and the best of Greek philosophers, those who in other respects have come nearest to Bible ethics, are wofully behind in regard to personal purity of heart and life, some of them tolerating and others approving that which enlightened Christian sentiment utterly condemns. Let any one fairly investigate the genesis and "evolution" of our modern ideas of chastity and purity, and

he will find that they are traceable chiefly to the Hebrew Scriptures as their source. And so the remarkable fact will present itself that to these very Scriptures, and largely to those parts of them where the corrupt imagination of certain cavillers finds an indecency which is all its own, we owe that very sentiment of delicacy which makes it impossible for us to read them aloud in public or in the family.

Now that the need of a great atonement, to purge the sins even of the chosen and separated people, has been made evident by the fall of Nadab and Abihu (Lev. x.), and further impressed by a striking series of regulations, pointing first to the danger of contamination from without (xi.), and then to the horrible nature of sin within, as a hereditary taint (xii.), as a loathsome disease (xiii., xiv.), and as a source of frequent defilement (xv.), we are prepared for appreciating the solemnities prescribed in chapter xvi. as the ritual to be observed on

THE GREAT ATONEMENT DAY.

On this day alone, of all the days of the year, being the tenth day of the seventh month, the inner veil was drawn aside, and the Holy of Holies opened for the entrance of the high-priest. Our first thought would probably be, that of all the days of the year this would be the most joyful; for was not the Holy of Holies a symbol of heaven, and what could be more joyful than the thought, "heaven is opened to-day"? On the contrary, it was appointed to be a day of special fasting and humiliation. Why? Because, as may very well be inferred

from the tenor of the chapters preceding, the leading thought presented by the ritual for the day was not the opening of heaven with all its glories, but rather the solemn warning that "there shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." It is the old, old lesson pressed home once again, and more solemnly than ever, that "without holiness no man can see the Lord." It will be time enough by-and-by to unfold the glories of the future, to tell of the golden city with its gates of pearl, its blessed company and joy unspeakable; but first there must be borne deep into the soul this abiding conviction, that before we are prepared even to *see* the kingdom (John iii. 3), we must be saved from sin. "Thou shalt call His name Jesus," not because He shall prepare a beautiful place for His people, not because He shall crown them with glory and joy, but because "He shall save His people *from their sins*." The method of the Bible is not to put rewards in the foreground. It is not happiness first, but holiness. And it is only after *holiness to the Lord* has taken strong and abiding possession of the soul, that *happiness from the Lord* comes down on joyous wing from out the open heaven.

Marvel not, then, that on the day on which the "Holiest of all" was opened, the people were called to fasting and humiliation on account of their sin, nor wonder that, for the purpose of entering within the veil, the high-priest was directed to put on, not his robes "of glory and beauty," but plain linen garments, all of white (even the girdle, usually of the colours of the sanctuary when all the rest were colourless, being white on this occasion), so that the thought of holiness should stand

before the mind's eye of the people quite alone. This seems to be the intent of the *nota bene* of the fourth verse: "These are holy garments." Still further, the festal offerings were excluded: no bread-offering, no joy-offering to-day; only the sin-offering and the burnt-offering, the great essentials. And even the burnt-offering sinks into an entirely secondary position, that the attention may be concentrated from beginning to end on the sin-offering, and on the great fact of atonement, which gave significance to the ritual and name to the day.

The high-priest must offer an atonement first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. We shall confine our attention to the latter, as the prominent and characteristic feature of the day. The sin-offering for the people consisted of two goats; the number being two from a necessity similar to that which required two birds for the ceremony of cleansing the leper. Two birds were needed on that occasion, in order that both death and resurrection might be in the symbol, which would have been otherwise impossible without a miracle; and here two goats are necessary, in order that both the means of atonement and the result of atonement may be presented in the same rite.

The one goat, determined by lot to be "for the Lord," symbolized, as we shall see, the means; the other, determined by lot to be "for the scapegoat," *

* We do not enter on the discussion of the difficult word Azazel, because we believe that, after all that has been written on the subject, the meaning conveyed to the mind by our translation is more nearly accurate than by any that could be substituted.

the effect of atonement. The former was sacrificed at the altar of burnt-offering, and its blood carried within the veil with the same attendant ceremonies as were prescribed for the previous entrance, when the high-priest presented the blood of the bullock as a sin-offering for himself. The manner of his entrance was in keeping with all that had gone before. It was with no eager curiosity that the high-priest drew aside the veil, but in deep reverence and humility, with downcast eyes directed to the Mercy-Seat and to the floor, where the sacred blood was to be sprinkled seven times, while a cloud of incense rose before him to veil the dazzling lustre of the Shekinah glory. The sprinkling of the Mercy-Seat and of the floor in front of it, was followed by a similar use of the blood in the Holy Place, and at the altar of burnt-offering, "to hallow" the scene of worship and of sacrifice "from the uncleanness of the children of Israel" (ver. 19), services in which we recognize the counterpart of what had been so impressively taught in the preceding chapters as to the contaminating effect of sin on all it touches.

The idea is, that even after the most scrupulous care had been taken all through the year, not only in the avoiding of sin, but also in the atoning for it by following the prescribed ritual of the altar and of the Holy Place, so much of evil still remained, adhering as it were to the most sacred services of the sanctuary, and accumulating from day to day, that every year there needed to be this great atonement, not only for the sins of the people, but for "reconciling the holy place and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar" (ver. 20). So

much for the goat which was determined by lot to be "for the Lord."

The other goat was to be dealt with in an entirely different way: "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness; and the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited" (ver. 21, 22). We have seen that the hallowing of the Tabernacle from all the uncleanness of the children of Israel was the aspect of atonement presented in the former part of the ceremonial. Now it is the hallowing of the people themselves that is prominent. And inasmuch as the means of atonement had been very fully exhibited in the early part by the killing of the animal and the sprinkling of its blood, the mind is now directed specially to the result, viz., the removal of the iniquities of the penitent and believing people far away out of sight and memory, "to a land not inhabited," where no eye could ever see them, or finger point at them in scorn or reproach. The effect of this impressive ceremony will be traced in such utterances as these in the poet prophets of later times: "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us"; "The iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found"; "Thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea."

And now that the great atonement has been made,

the high-priest puts off the linen garments and puts on his gorgeous robes, the onyx stones upon his shoulders, the precious stones upon his breast again, and offers the burnt-offering for himself and for the people. We have seen already that the day was to be above all a day of atonement, so that the sin-offering takes the place of all the others, and stands out as it were alone; but even then the opportunity cannot be allowed to pass of pointing out that atonement is in order to dedication and acceptance, the dedication of the people to God and the acceptance of the people by God; and this is kept before the mind by the presentation of the burnt-offering by the priest in his priestly attire as the representative of the now "reconciled" people.

So far we have had before us simply the symbolical meaning of these impressive rites. But as we have looked at their symbolism, we cannot have failed to see how instructively typical they are of the work of Him who came to fulfil the ritual of the great Atonement Day. He came, not in His robes of glory and beauty, but in the plain linen garments of humanity, assumed in order that He might make atonement for us in the flesh. But though the garments of His humanity were plain, they were white, for "He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth." And thus attired, He advances to the altar; and the blood of the victim flows. The awful sacrifice proceeds; until at last, when all is over, "Behold! the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom." "It is finished." Heaven is opened now. "It was necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these

[the sacrifices of the great atonement day]; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these" (Heb. ix. 23). "The holy places made with hands" were but "figures of the true"; but now the Holy Place not made with hands, even Heaven itself, is reconciled, and ready for the entrance of a redeemed and purified people.

And accordingly, our great High-Priest, having laid aside His plain vesture of mortal flesh, re-clothes Himself with His garments of glory and beauty, and thus attired, in the fair form of His resurrection vesture, bearing upon His strong and conquering shoulders the weight, and in His warm and loving heart the names, of all His children, He leads the way as "the Forerunner" into the holy, blessed presence of our loving reconciled Father, God.

The very close connection between atonement and the obedience of the daily life, is strikingly suggested by the easy and natural way in which the transition is made from the lofty regions of faith into which the symbolism of the sixteenth chapter has elevated the thoughts of the faithful, to the level ground of ordinary every-day duties in the chapters which follow. We have here, as it were, an answer by anticipation to the objection raised against the faith of the Gospel in later times. One might readily conceive a danger attendant upon such a service as that which we have been following, culminating in the strongest assurance that all the iniquities of the people have been, on the ground of an atonement so easily offered and so ready to hand, re-

moved for ever out of sight—the danger of making light of the necessity of daily obedience. This danger is guarded against by an abrupt and peremptory return to the legal enactments which immediately follow; so that Moses might have challenged criticism in much the same terms as the Apostle Paul did, when he said: "Do we then make void the law through faith? Nay, rather, we establish the law." The opening of heaven is of no value unless it lead to the hallowing of earth. Mere religiousness will never do. There are those who under the influence of Divine things get into exalted and ecstatic states, see glorious visions, and seem to sit for a time at heaven's gate, who are nevertheless capable afterwards of very mean actions. There is no countenance in Scripture to such glaring inconsistencies. When we shall have been finally purged from our selfishness, it will be time to indulge in these transports without anything to hold in check our holy enthusiasm. But meantime matter-of-fact duty must attend very closely on our loftiest exercises of faith and hope. If we may "mount up with wings as eagles" at times, we must even then see that we are ready to "run and not be weary, and to walk and not faint," even though the walking may seem to be mere plodding along a "plain path." No building of tabernacles on the mount as yet —only a short stay and a quick return to the duties and services of the plain beneath.

In the seventeenth chapter there are regulations about food; in the eighteenth, regarding marriage and the purity of the family relations; in the nineteenth and twentieth, sundry precepts of general morality; and in

the twenty-first and twenty-second, special regulations for the conduct of the priests of the Lord. Here again our plan forbids the investigation of details. I shall therefore only make a few general remarks on the characteristics of these regulations.

First, in regard to those passages which caution the people against vices of special enormity, we must remember that they were about to be settled in dangerous proximity to peoples who were thoroughly corrupted by these very vices, and therefore the cautions were not by any means unnecessary. Accustomed as most of us are to the pure air of Christian society, in which, notwithstanding all the selfishness and sin that still abound, vices such as these are "not so much as named," and the very possibility of them seems out of the question, it is difficult for us to imagine how different was the condition of society, before these purifying influences were brought to bear on it, which issued from Mount Sinai first, and afterwards from Gennesaret's shore and "the place called Calvary." And when we find such warnings in the book of Leviticus, we ought in the first place to feel humbled by the thought of the fearful lengths to which sin unrestrained by Divine grace will carry its wretched victim; and, in the second place, to lift up our hearts in gratitude to God, that in these latter days, though evil still abounds, we are nevertheless protected from such outrages to our moral and spiritual nature as those to which even the chosen people were exposed in the ancient times.

On the other hand, it is pleasant to find in these chapters the evidence that the Mosaic law came in many respects nearer to the morality of the New Testament than

most people are willing to admit. For illustration, let us read a few of these laws. "When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger. I am the Lord your God" (xix. 9, 10). "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of an old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord" (ver. 32)—a much needed injunction still. "And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God" (ver. 33, 34).

Finally, it is interesting to notice in these regulations, and throughout the entire Law, the care which is taken to keep religion and morality closely wedded and welded together. "I am the Lord your God," is continually put forth, not as a creed article, but as an unanswerable argument for strictest obedience and the most scrupulous integrity. The relations of privilege which the people enjoyed are continually set forth as increasing their responsibility. "To whom much is given, of them much shall be required," is a principle taken for granted all through. The quotations already given are sufficient illustration; but another may be added, especially as, unhappily, the world has not yet outgrown the need of it. "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just hin, shall ye have: I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt"

(ver. 35, 36). And so, too, in the closing passages of our long section: "*Therefore* shall ye keep My commandments, and do them: I am the LORD. Neither shall ye profane My holy name; but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel: I am the LORD which hallow you, that brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD" (xxii. 32, 33).

XIV.

SACRED TIMES.

LEVITICUS XXIII.–XXVII.

THE sacred times of Israel are arranged in cycles of seven, the sacred number. There seem to be no data in Scripture for determining on what idea the sacredness of the number seven is founded. In the symbolic numbers of other nations we may possibly find some assistance, especially in the system of Pythagoras, who on account of extensive travel, particularly in Egypt, is likely to have been acquainted with the mind of the ancients on the subject which lay nearest to his heart. In his system, three was the symbol of the infinite, and four of the finite, the Cosmos. The number seven (= 3 + 4) represented the union of the infinite and finite, of heaven and earth, of God and man. It is quite possible there may be some thought of this kind underlying the sacredness of the number; and perhaps we have some indication of it in the fact that the same combination of letters which is used in the Hebrew language for the word seven, means also an oath, which is an appeal from the finite to the infinite. But, whatever be the explanation, the fact is evident, that seven was a sacred number, and that accordingly the sacred times are ar-

ranged in cycles of seven. There is first a cycle of seven days, ending with the Sabbath; then a cycle of seven weeks, closing with "the Feast of Weeks"; a cycle of seven months, culminating in the Month of Feasts; a cycle of seven years, closing with the Sabbatical Year; and a cycle of seven sevens of years, or seven weeks of years, followed by the Jubilee.

I.—THE SEVEN DAYS, CLOSING WITH THE SABBATH.

We shall not dwell on this most familiar cycle of seven, further than to call attention to the way in which it is introduced: "Concerning the feasts of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, even these are My feasts. Six days shall work be done: but the seventh day is the Sabbath of rest." The Sabbath, then, was a *feast* day. It is very common now to represent the Jewish Sabbath as a day of bondage, of weariness and dreariness. That many otherwise intelligent and even learned people are in the habit of so characterizing it, does not alter the fact that it is a mark of inexcusable ignorance so to do. The Sabbath was intended to be, and to all true Hebrews really was, a day of rejoicing, the choicest day of all the seven. The first object was *rest*: "Six days shalt thou do thy work, and on the seventh day thou shalt rest." Is it so hard and cruel a thing to insist on working people having a day's rest after six days' labour? "Six days shalt thou work, and on the seventh thou shalt rest; that thine ox and thine ass may rest, and the stranger may be refreshed." The critics we refer to often speak as if Sabbath laws were bad enough for

those "to the manner born," but intolerable for strangers with different habits who are unfortunate enough to reside among them. It all depends on the way it is looked at; and here is the way the law of Moses looked at it: "that the stranger may be *refreshed*." It is not the idea of restraint that is prominent, it is rest and refreshment. Then there is the additional idea of *holiness:* "remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." There are those to whom the very thought of holiness is an intolerable burden. All we can say about them is, that they are deeply to be pitied. To crown all, there is the thought of *joy*, which appears all through the Old Testament references to the Sabbath. Rest, refreshment, holiness, joy—these are the ideas which are connected with the Sabbath of the Lord (the Sabbath of the Rabbis was a different thing), and yet our intelligent critics tell us—and iterate and reiterate it *ad nauseam*—that the Sabbath of the Decalogue was a dreary bondage.

Not only so, but the entire Jewish system is often represented as dull, dreary, and dolorous. On the contrary, it was characterized especially by times of feasting and rejoicing. See how much there is in the law about "the feasts of the Lord," and how little about fasting! The year was studded over with feast-days. There was only one day of fasting and humiliation, viz., the great Atonement Day. Later on in the history, when the sins of the people had drawn down upon them Divine chastisements in the shape of great national calamities, fast days were multiplied; but in the beginning it was not so. The Lord's intention was to fill the week, the month, the year, with joy. It was for this purpose that

all the feasts were appointed, and specially the first and most frequently recurring, and therefore the most blessed of all, the holy, joyous Sabbath.

II. — THE SEVEN WEEKS, BEGINNING WITH THE PASSOVER AND CLOSING WITH PENTECOST.

This cycle of weeks was of yearly recurrence. It began with the Passover eve, that "night to be much observed unto the Lord, for bringing them out of the land of Egypt; that night to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations." As the original Passover was the beginning of their national history, so the anniversary of it was regarded as the beginning of the sacred year; the month of Abib in which it occurred being reckoned the first month, in accordance with the regulation made at the time of the Exodus: "this month shall be unto you the beginning of months; it shall be the first month of the year to you."

The feast of the Passover was, in the first place, commemorative. It celebrated the great deliverance from Egyptian bondage. But, inasmuch as that deliverance was itself typical of the great salvation from sin, the ceremonial of the Passover feast was typical of the means by which this great salvation was to be effected. As we had this before us in our study of the Exodus, we need not dwell on it now. The feast of the Passover, occupying a day, was immediately followed by "the feast of Unleavened Bread," lasting for a week. We have seen already that bread was a constant symbol of life, while leaven stood for corruption; so that the idea associated with unleavened bread is that of life purified

from evil. The seven days during which the feast lasted, being a complete cycle of time, fitly represented life in its entirety, which ought to be purified from all evil as the result of the atoning sacrifice symbolized in the Passover. The connection of ideas is very clearly brought out by the Apostle Paul in his first Epistle to the Corinthians (v. 7, 8): "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

There was one day in the week of the feast which was specially signalized. It was the day following the Sabbath of that week (Lev. xxiii. 11). On that day the first sheaf of the early harvest, the barley harvest, which at that season of the year was just beginning to be gathered, was presented by waving to the Lord. It was from this day, "Wave-sheaf Day" we may call it, that the seven weeks of Pentecost were counted. The special importance of this will appear by-and-by.

The day after the seven weeks closed, being the fiftieth day, was the feast of Pentecost (ver. 15, 16). This feast had probably a historical basis too, the fiftieth day being the anniversary of the Lord's appearing on Sinai; but if it were so, the historical reference did not appear in the ritual for the day, which had regard, like the ritual of the wave-sheaf day, from which the seven weeks were counted, to the harvest operations. By this time the wheat harvest had been gathered in, and in accordance with this the characteristic ceremony of the day was the

presentation by waving to the Lord of two loaves, baked from the meal of the recent harvest. It is worthy of notice that, while with the wave sheaf of the earlier feast no sin-offering was presented, and no leaven was in use (it being the days of unleavened bread), the wave loaves of the later feast were by express orders baked with leaven (ver. 17), and their presentation to the Lord was accompanied with a sin-offering (ver. 19). On the significance of this we shall have something more to say farther on. Meantime it is enough to notice that the *sheaf* was the work of God, pure and simple, offered just as it grew in the field, whereas the *loaves* were the result of man's labour in a sense in which the other was not. God's work is perfect; man's at best is mixed with evil, and needs to be atoned for. The feast of Pentecost, as we have seen, closes the cycle of the seven weeks.

III. — THE SEVEN MONTHS, CULMINATING IN THE MONTH OF FEASTS.

The month of the Passover was, as we have seen, the first month of the sacred year. The feast of Pentecost, coming as it did at the close of the seven-week cycle, occurred in the third month. But the culmination and crown of the sacred year was in the seventh month (ver. 23–44). There were three great occasions in this month. The first was the feast of *Trumpets* (ver. 23–25). The blowing of the trumpets summoned the people to a holy convocation, which ushered in the special joy of the specially sacred month. But the highest joy which

is possible to man on earth can be reached only through the valley of humiliation and the pathway of penitential sorrow. Hence on the tenth day of the month there were the solemnities of the great Atonement Day (ver. 26–32), which formed the subject of our last lecture. We then dwelt on the remarkable fact, which appears again in the passage before us with still greater emphasis, that the day on which the Holy of Holies was opened was the one day of the year which was specially set apart for fasting and humiliation and penitential sorrow. But it is important now to notice that, after the short season of humiliation was over, the crowning joy of all the year was ushered in. The day of fasting, occurring on the tenth, was followed by a four days' pause, to give its solemn impressions time to be graven deeply on the people's souls, and then, on the fifteenth day of the month, the nation was summoned to the festivities and rejoicings of the great feast of *Tabernacles* (ver. 33–44).

This feast lasted seven days, like the feast of unleavened bread at the beginning of the year; and the sacred joy increased from day to day until "the last day, that great day of the feast," concerning which it was a common saying of the Rabbis that he who had not seen the rejoicing of the people at that glad time, had yet to learn what true joy was. As in the others, there was a historical basis for the celebration. It commemorated the time when, after leaving Egypt behind them, the children of Israel gathered in their first camp of freedom at Succoth, where they had built themselves booths or leafy huts, whence the name. Hence also the use of palm branches and boughs of goodly trees (ver. 40), and

the dwelling in booths (ver. 42) during the celebration. It is interesting to find here the roots of that familiar association of ideas by which palm branches are the recognized symbols of triumph.

Like the other great feasts, this one was also associated with the labours of the husbandman. It was the great harvest festival, "the harvest home" of Israel. The entire produce and vintage of the year were by this time gathered in; and accordingly it was known frequently as the feast of *Ingathering*. In this aspect it may be regarded as prophetical of the times of consummation, the culmination of the Sacred Year of the Lord, when the "great multitude which no man can number, of all nations and people and kindred and tongues, shall stand before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, *and palms in their hands*, crying with a loud voice, 'Salvation to our God that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.'"

Before passing to the remaining cycles of seven, it may be well to pause, as indeed the sacred writer pauses (see chap. xxiv., which is obviously parenthetical), in order to review the Sacred Year, and gather from it any lessons it may contain concerning Him in whom all the types and shadows of the law find their fulfilment and realization. For this purpose it will be well to examine the diagram opposite, which the pages following explain.

The sacrifice of "Christ our Passover" is already quite familiar to us, only it may be well to call attention to the

THE SACRED YEAR.

LEV. XXIII.

PASSOVER EVE, (Followed by the Feast of Unleavened Bread.) — **The Lamb,** {LEV. xxiii. 5. / 1 COR. v. 7.} — **The "Corn" of Wheat of John xii. 24.**

WAVE-SHEAF MORN, (On "The Morrow after the Sabbath.") — **First Sheaf,** {LEV. xxiii. 11. / 1 COR. xv. 20.} — **Early First Fruits.** (No Leaven, no Sin-Offering.)

7 Weeks.

PENTECOST DAY, (Feast of Weeks.) — **First Loaves,** {LEV. xxiii. 17. / JAS. i. 18.} — **First Fruits of Results.** (Leaven, Sin-Offering.)

The Months till the 7th.

Faith. Love. Hope. — (Our Place.) — Believe. Work. Rejoice.

Trumpets.
Atonement.

INGATHERING WEEK, (Feast of Tabernacles.) — **Palms,** {LEV. xxiii. 40. / REV. vii. 9.} — **Harvest Home.** (Sum of Results.)

striking illustration of it, which was given by our Lord Himself to Andrew and Philip, on their calling His attention to the desire to see Him of certain Greeks, who had come "to worship at the feast," that very feast of Passover which was signalized by His crucifixion. It is this: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except *a corn of wheat* fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit . . . . and I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die" (John xii. 24–33).

On the day following the Sabbath, the first sheaf of the early harvest was presented to the Lord. And it was on that very day, the day following the Sabbath of the Passover, being the first day of the week, that Christ rose from the dead, and became "the *firstfruits* of them that sleep" (1 Cor. xv. 20).

After the lapse of seven weeks from that day (you remember how carefully Israel was instructed to count the seven weeks from the wave-sheaf morn), on the fiftieth, or Pentecostal day, the first loaves of the harvest were presented to the Lord; and on that very day, the fiftieth or Pentecostal day after His resurrection, there were presented to the Lord the *firstfruits of the results* of His great redeeming work, when the first three thousand converts were gathered by the labours of the Apostles (Acts ii.) And do we not now see a special significance in the presence of leaven in the loaves, and the accompaniment of the sin-offering in the presentation? Christ Himself was the Firstfruits; and He was absolutely without taint of the leaven of sin. But when

the firstfruits of His people are presented to the Lord, though their sins are forgiven, they are far from perfect yet; the leaven of evil is still there, and will show itself, alas! too soon, in the guilt of Ananias and Sapphira. Still, they do belong to the spiritual harvest, and though, in token of the sin that still is found among them, the use of leaven and the accompaniment of the sin-offering find a place in the ritual of presentation, yet imperfect as they are, they are presented to the Lord and accepted by Him as the firstfruits of the great harvest which shall be garnered in the fulness of the times.

The Ingathering Week, as we have seen, will find its antitype in *the great gathering of the redeemed* of all nations which shall close the Sacred Year of the Lord. The days in which we live, come in between Pentecost and the Ingathering. By faith we look backwards and grasp the great facts of the death and resurrection of our Lord (Passover Eve and Wave-sheaf Morn), and the descent of the Comforter (Pentecost). In hope we look forward to the coming Day of the Lord, and rejoice in the anticipated glories of the great Week of Ingathering which that day shall usher in. Meantime we are called in the devotion of loving service to work as well as wait for His coming, blowing the Gospel trumpet, and proclaiming the full Atonement which prepares the way for the glorious consummation. (See Diagram).

IV.—THE SEVEN YEARS, CLOSING WITH THE SABBATICAL YEAR.

Just as the last of every seven days was a Sabbath day, so the last of every seven years was a Sabbath year,

according to the law in Leviticus xxv. 1–7. During this year the ordinary labours of the husbandman were suspended (ver. 4); but we are not from this to infer, as Tacitus does in a passing reference to the Jews of his time, that the seventh year was devoted to idleness; for it must be remembered that there was no prohibition of work in general, such as applied to the seventh day. The rest of the seventh day was for man and beast; the rest of the seventh year was for the land: "it is a year of rest *unto the land*" (ver. 5). From this it follows that the year would afford an opportunity for attending to many necessary things which in other years might be apt to be neglected on account of the pressure of work upon the land itself; just as the long months of the Canadian winter are no time of idleness to the diligent farmer there, though from the beginning of December to the end of March the soil may be completely and thickly covered with its heavy mantle of snow. The ordinance of the Sabbatical year may indeed have had some reference to the advantages which were to be derived from allowing land that is cultivated from year to year to lie fallow at times; and such rest would be all the more necessary at a time when there was no system, such as prevails now, of rotation of crops. But whatever may be thought as to its agricultural bearing, there is every reason to suppose that, like all the rest of the ritual, the Sabbath year had its symbolical meaning. What this may have been will be more advantageously considered after we have studied the Year of Jubilee.

The appointment of the year of rest for the land was quite a severe test of the faith of Israel; and in the ab-

sence of evidence on the subject, it remains doubtful whether they stood the test in the early years of their history. It would almost seem, from some passages (especially 2 Chron. xxxvi. 21), that the ordinance was systematically disregarded, and that this was one of the reasons why the national history was so sadly unlike its ideal. There is, however, evidence to show that the Sabbatical year was observed after the return from the Babylonish Captivity.

V.—THE SEVEN WEEKS OF YEARS, FOLLOWED BY THE JUBILEE.

The idea of weeks of years was quite familiar to the Hebrew mind, and the more so that the Hebrew word for "week" was simply a modification of the word "seven." When we remember this, we can see that there is nothing arbitrary in the interpretation which is usually given to such passages as that in Daniel, where his seventy weeks are understood to mean 490 years (Dan. ix. 24). So many weeks literally mean so many sevens. Ordinarily, of course, it meant sevens of days; but there was nothing out of the way in its application to sevens of years, especially as the conception of weeks of years was rendered quite familiar by the mode of reckoning up the years between one Jubilee and another.

The characteristic features of the Jubilee year, in addition to what it had in common with the Sabbatical year, are set forth in the tenth verse of the chapter before us: "Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants

thereof: it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." Here we have, as always, the predominant notes of holiness and joy: "Ye shall *hallow* the fiftieth year"; "it shall be a *jubilee** unto you." The former is the keynote of the entire Mosaic system; the latter is the predominant strain (for, as we have seen, there is very little of the minor key in it) throughout; and the notes of the Jubilee were the climax of the "joyful noise" which this favoured land was called to make unto the Lord (Ps. c. 1). The special occasions of jubilation in the Jubilee year are also given in the verse we have just quoted: first, the proclamation of "liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof," and next an invitation to "return every man unto his possession," and "every man unto his family."

Here again there is undoubtedly a political foundation for the Jubilee ordinance, just as there probably was an agricultural basis for the ordinance of the Sabbatical year; and a very little consideration will show that, as a political regulation, it would operate to prevent the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few, and tend to preserve that comparative social equality which distinguished the community of Israel in the beginning. It would, indeed, tend periodically to rectify all those disorders and abuses which are apt to grow up in the state, and become aggravated by the lapse of time, and

* The most probable derivation of the word "jubilee" is, by onomatopœia, from a sound expressive of joy.

would give those who had been unfortunate or inconsiderate, an opportunity of beginning afresh in the ancient patrimony. And all this would be accomplished without the slightest infringement of vested or acquired rights, inasmuch as the law was made before the land was divided, before a single transaction had been entered into in reference to any part of it; so that whatever was done, was done with the full knowledge of the bearing which the Jubilee law would have upon the transaction, when the appointed time came round.

But while the political importance of the Jubilee is sufficiently obvious, there can be no question that it had a symbolical and prophetic significance as well. This appears in sundry passages, notably in that passage in Isaiah which our Lord read at the opening of His ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth, as recorded by Luke (iv. 18, 19): "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach *the acceptable year of the Lord*." And then He began to say, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." Thus our Lord Himself claimed that in His Gospel the Year of Jubilee received its fulfilment. And surely the claim was well founded. Did He not "proclaim liberty through all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Lev. xxv. 10)? And not only through all the *land*, but through all the *earth;* and here it is important to bear in mind that the Hebrew word for "earth" and for "land" is the same, so that the words in Leviticus

can, without the alteration of a single letter, be so applied: "Proclaim liberty through all the earth to all the inhabitants thereof." "Behold the lamb of God that taketh away the sin *of the world!*" And the connection is made still closer when we remember that the Septuagint translation of "the Jubilee" was "the year of forgiveness"; so that, by the common use of that translation, the minds of the people were specially prepared for finding in the forgiveness of sins which was preached by Jesus Christ the fulfilment of the leading characteristic of the Jubilee. And then did He not proclaim also the "return of every man unto his possession," and of "every man unto his family"? By sin every man had forfeited his original birthright, and had been banished from the blessed family of his Father God, and had thus become a pauper and an outcast. Jesus Christ came to restore us to our lost inheritance, and to the family from which we had wandered. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, though He was rich, yet for your sakes became poor, that ye through His poverty might be made rich." And ye know also that "to as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." And all this He did in such a way as not to dim in the slightest, but rather greatly to increase, the lustre of the Divine holiness. We thus see that in every sense of the term, "the acceptable year of the Lord" which the Saviour preached was the fulfilling of all that was symbolic and prophetic in the grand old Jubilee of Israel.

If we follow carefully the series of sacred cycles of

time, which we have briefly surveyed, we shall find first a strictly Sabbatic or seventh day series culminating in the Sabbatical year; and then, growing out of it, another similar series, not strictly Sabbatic, but rather an eighth day series, retaining, however, the Sabbatical characteristics, and culminating in the Jubilee. Let us look at each of these in succession.

I.—THE SABBATIC SERIES.

Here we have first a day series, six days of labour followed by one of rest; then a month series, six months at the beginning of each sacred year, followed by the Sabbatical month; and finally, a year series, six years of ordinary labour, and then a year of rest for the land. Now, it is important to bear in mind that this arrangement of six working periods (not necessarily days, as is evident), followed by a period of rest, is rooted in the six working days or periods of creation, followed by the day of Divine rest (see Exod. xx. 11, and Heb. iv. 3). On the other hand, there is evidence in Scripture to show that the Sabbath was a type of "the rest that remaineth for the people of God" after the working time of life on earth is over. What is the inference from these unquestioned facts of Scripture? Is it not fair to infer that in these successive Sabbatical series, beginning with the miniature series of the week of days, and enlarging to the week of years, we have a symbolic presentation of God's plan in creation and in providence, of six working periods of indefinite extent, characterized by effort, struggle, trial, slow and sometimes uncertain

progress, onward to a glorious end, to be realized and enjoyed in a seventh period, distinguished from the six as a period of rest—not the rest of inactivity, however, but the rest of freedom from the efforts and struggles and trials of the preceding periods? So much in general; but we shall find something more special and more striking when we look at the other series.

II.—THE EIGHTH DAY SERIES.

Those who have followed attentively these cycles of sacred time, must have observed that, while seven is the ever recurring number, and while the seventh of each series is the Sabbath, there have also come in some very significant eighths. The eighth day was of course the first of a new series; but it is not as the first of an ordinary series of seven that it is treated, but as an extra day beyond the seven. *As an eighth*, it was outside of the Jewish cycles of seven. Was there any special reason for these eighth day celebrations? Let us look at them and see.

The first was on the Wave-sheaf morn. Here are the directions given: "The priest shall wave the sheaf before the Lord, to be accepted for you: *on the morrow after the Sabbath* the priest shall wave it" (Lev. xxiii. 11). Now, compare with this the evangelist Matthew's account of the resurrection, which, as we have seen, took place on Wave-sheaf morn: "*In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week*, came Mary," etc. On the morrow after the Sabbath Christ rose from the dead, "the firstfruits of them that

sleep," accepted for them—very early in the morning, as all the Evangelists are careful to state, thus beginning a new year, not embraced within the compass of the old Jewish sacred times, but opening out indefinitely to the great spiritual harvest, of which the eighth day celebrations were the recognized types (see John iv. 35).

The next significant eighth was Pentecost. The Sabbath of weeks had been completed, seven times seven days, after which came Pentecost, not on the forty-ninth day, not on the seventh of the last cycle of seven, but on the eighth, the morrow following the Sabbath. And here again it is manifestly outside of the sacred sevens, because the cycle of seven weeks came only once a year, so that the fiftieth day pointed, as it were, out into vacant space. As the Wave-sheaf Day was the morrow after the Sabbath at the beginning, Pentecost was the morrow after the Sabbath at the end of the seven weeks. In the same way, the spiritual Pentecost was the fiftieth day from the Resurrection, and accordingly fell also on the first day of the week. On that day, as we have seen, the firstfruits of results, corresponding to the first loaves from the harvest, were presented to the Lord, and being given on the morrow after the Sabbath, the finger on Time's dial pointed, not backwards to the years of the past, but forwards to the full harvest of the future.

The third significant eighth was the Jubilee year. It too fell, not on the forty-ninth, but on the fiftieth. If convenience had ruled the choice, then undoubtedly the forty-ninth would have been chosen, for it was a Sabbatical year, as all the last of the successive series of seven were. And indeed the obvious inconvenience of

two sacred years following in succession has made so deep an impression on the minds of some interpreters, that they have tried to make it appear that after all it was the forty-ninth, and not the fiftieth, that was appointed for the Jubilee. But the language of the ordinance is too precise to admit of any such theory. "Thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years. Then shalt thou cause the trumpet of the Jubilee to sound on the tenth day of the seventh month, in the day of Atonement shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land. *And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year.*" The Jubilee was evidently, then, like Pentecost and like the Wave-sheaf morn, an eighth. And again, we see how appropriately it was so appointed. Having its fulfilment in the proclamation of the Gospel Jubilee, it belongs to the future rather than to the past, not to a dispensation which was destined to "wax old," and then "vanish away," but to an era of which the glorious consummation is only as yet dimly sketched in the apocalyptic vision of the inspired Seer of Patmos.

And now, when we consider how these eighth days spring out of the bosom of the cycles of seven with their Sabbatic sevenths, and when we remember that these eighth days had also the Sabbatical characteristics, as was notably the case with the year of Jubilee (see Lev. xxv. 11, 12), we can see very clearly how natural it was that the seventh day of the Mosaic economy should, without any legislative interference, merge into the eighth day, or first day of the week of the Christian

dispensation; and how ignorant those are of the sacred times of the Hebrews, who represent it as absurd to suppose that the first day of the week, or our Sunday, as they call it, can have any connection with the Jewish Sabbath. Not only was the change a natural one from the standpoint of the early disciples, which is all that is usually argued for, but the way is prepared for it in the very structure of the Sabbatical cycles of ancient Israel. And this becomes all the more striking, when we observe that, though the feast of Tabernacles was always spoken of as a seven days' feast, there was an eighth day celebration grafted on it: "On the *eighth* day shall be a holy convocation unto you; and ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord: it is a solemn assembly; and ye shall do no servile work therein" (xxiii. 36). This day had evidently all the characteristics of a Sabbath day; and yet, coming in as it does after the close of the last feast of the sacred year of Israel, it gives a hint of the Sabbath of the coming era, which shall no longer be the seventh, with a backward reference to the memories of the past, but the first day of the week, with a forward reference to the glories of an age whose Sun arose, never more to set, on the morrow after the Sabbath which followed the last Passover of the old covenant.

The chapters which follow come with peculiar sadness after the ordinance "concerning the feasts of the Lord." The feasts bespoke joy and rejoicing. Right after there is a long chapter (xxvi.), the most of which is filled with dark threatenings of coming vengeance. There are rich

promises in the event of obedience in the opening verses of the chapter: but as we read on we are appalled by the terrible threatenings. But did not the event prove how necessary they were? It was in mercy that the Lord warned Israel in language so plain and stern. And in the terrible earnestness which appears on the side of the threatening have we not an indication that the Lord foresaw the unfaithfulness of the people? In fact, the words of warning become so pointed that they pass into the form of a prophecy, which was most strikingly and awfully fulfilled in the subsequent history. His ordinances concerning the feast showed what was in His heart for His people. His warnings show that He knew what was in their hearts towards Him. He prepared joy and rejoicing for them. They wrought woe and desolation for themselves. But His mercy endureth for ever: "And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break My covenant with them: for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God: I am the Lord" (ver. 44, 45).

The last chapter of the book is taken up with directions for individual worship, on the details of which we cannot enter; but this general thought is suggested, that though the nation as a whole may lose its covenant standing, the way is always open for individuals. There is much comfort in this thought, in view of such dark times as those to which the prophetical part of the

preceding chapter points. The door of mercy is never shut, however dark and degenerate the times may be. However wickedness may abound in the world, and coldness and deadness in the Church, God will always have His witnesses, and they will always have their opportunities. This word is never changed, "Whosoever will, let him come." In all times religion in the last resort must be an individual matter between the soul and God. No man can be saved in a crowd; but neither can any man be lost in a crowd. And sometimes, when the great multitude seems to carry all before it, God still may have His seven thousand men, known to Him alone, who have brought their individual offerings to Him, and "never bowed the knee to Baal."

Remember the comfort that was given to Daniel, when his spirit was ready to faint in the prospect of the dark days which the prophetic vision had disclosed. "Go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest and stand in thy lot at the end of the days." "Go thou thy way"—in times of apostasy and darkness, it is for the individual believer to leave the destinies of the world and of the Church in the hands of Him who "doeth all things well," and seek only to be faithful to his own duty. As for others: "shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And as for thee: "thou shalt rest"—there is the fulfilment of the Sabbath and all the Sabbatic series—"and stand in thy lot at the end of the days"—there is the fulfilment of the Jubilee and all the eighth day series.

Amid all the secularities and unbelief and disobedience of the times, let us seek to maintain communion with

God, and bring our individual offerings, however "singular" they be, and we shall certainly find that "the joy of the Lord is our strength," and that His thoughts of love expressed in the feasts of the old covenant will be fulfilled for us,—and then at the end of the days we shall enter on our Sabbath of rest, and our Jubilee of joy eternal.

XV.

THE CAMP.

NUMBERS I.–VI.

THE Book of Numbers, on which we now enter, is the last of what are known as "the middle books" or the Pentateuch. The term is appropriate, not simply because the three books to which it is applied occupy numerically the middle of the entire volume of "the law," but because they stand together in a closer organic relation, so that the three may be regarded as a unity, having a common relation to Genesis on the one side and to Deuteronomy on the other.

Genesis may, as we have seen,* be regarded as the foreground of the entire Bible, and as such its foundation is broader than would have been necessary for the Pentateuch alone; but it has also its specific relations to the books which more immediately follow. In Genesis we have the soil, and the seed which was planted in it. In the Middle Books we have the plant of grace, developing into the tree of righteousness. In Deuteronomy we have directions for gathering the fruit which might be reasonably expected to grow on so "noble" a tree.†

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* See "Ages before Moses," Lect. XII.

† See Jeremiah ii. 21.

These relations will appear more clearly when we reach the last book. Meantime let us look somewhat carefully into the relations of the three middle books.

The foundation of all is laid in the Exodus proper, which may be considered as ending when the children of Israel arrived at the base of Sinai. The great *separation* was then complete, as is indicated in the opening words of the Sinai record: "Israel camped before the Mount, and Moses went up unto God, and the Lord called unto him out of the mountain, saying, Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and *how I bare you on eagle's wings, and brought you unto Myself.*" The remaining part of the book of Exodus (xx.–xl.) is of an entirely different character. It consists of a series of revelations given from the top of Mount Sinai, culminating, as we have seen, in the Tabernacle, with the erection and furnishing and dedication of which the book closes. The character of this second portion of the book of Exodus is *prophetical*, not in the modern sense of the word, as predictive, but in the Bible sense, as revealing the Divine will. As in Exodus we have the prophetical, so in Leviticus we have the *Priestly* law; and the question is naturally suggested: Is there any reason to connect the *Kingly* idea with the book of Numbers? It may not appear at first sight; but a little consideration will make it very plain. If you read through the first chapter, you will find that the pervading thought of it is going forth to war: "Take ye the sum of all the congregation of Israel . . . . from twenty years old and upward, all

that are able *to go forth to war* in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them *by their armies*" (1, 2, 3). The same is emphatically repeated thirteen times over, once for each of the twelve tribes, and once again for the whole of Israel (ver. 45). And then, at the close of the chapter, there are these significant words: "And the children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own *camp*, and every man by his own standard, throughout their *hosts*." Here we have the key to the book. The armies of the Lord are setting forth to war, to subdue the land of promise for God and for His people.

Reverting to that summary of the Mosaic economy already referred to, that preliminary sketch of the dispensation which was given to the people immediately on their arrival at Mount Sinai, we find it in substance this: "If ye will obey My voice indeed, and keep my covenant . . . . ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Exod. xix. 5, 6). The "*voice*" and the "*covenant*" we have in Exodus. In Leviticus the *priestly* privileges of the people are set forth; in Numbers the armies of the king are mustered and sent forth to establish a *kingdom*, the kingdom of the holy nation. In Exodus we have a series of revelations from "the Holy Mount"; in Leviticus we have a series from the Holy Place; in Numbers we have the covenanted hosts, the priestly armies of the Lord, setting out to establish His kingdom in the Holy Land. In Exodus the Lord comes down and speaks to the people from the mountain top; in Leviticus the people meet with God in His sanctuary in the plain; in Numbers

they are called to service for Him in the field. In Exodus the people look up and listen to the voice of God; in Leviticus they draw near, and as it were behold His face; in Numbers they go forth in His name to do His will. In Exodus the relation is that of a father in heaven, and his children on earth; in Leviticus it is that of sinners and their Saviour God, who tabernacles with them here below; in Numbers it is that of soldiers of the Cross going forth in the power of the Spirit, to do battle for the Lord. In Exodus the people are called to obedience; in Leviticus, to worship; and in Numbers, to service in the field.

So much for the relations of the three books. Let us now look more particularly at the book before us. And here it is very important to keep in mind the distinction between the ideal and the actual. Numbers is often spoken of as a book of the wilderness and of wilderness service. And as a matter of fact there is much of the wilderness in it. But why? Because the people failed of their high calling. The idea of the book is not that of wilderness wandering. It is that of the hosts of the Lord marching to conquest. This is the Divine idea. As we proceed we shall see how the people failed and fell short, and, ceasing to be the Lord's hosts, became poor wanderers in the wilderness. But we shall be very far astray if we set out with that as the proper idea of the book.

Remembering, then, that the idea of Numbers is the marshalling of the Lord's hosts, and their victorious march to Canaan, it is appropriate to ask whether here, as well as in Exodus and Leviticus, we have any

"shadow of good things to come"? Undoubtedly we have. Surely there is something more and better here than the story of an old war. Surely there is an interest beyond the merely historical. What then is it? What is the service which corresponds now, to that for which the hosts of the Lord were marshalled at the base of Sinai? It is the Missionary service, the service to which the hosts of the Lord are called under the new covenant. There are indeed in this most interesting and instructive book very many exceedingly valuable lessons for the individual believer; but the great value of the book, its application as a whole, is its instruction and inspiration for the great work to which the Church of the New Testament is called: the conquest of the world for Christ.

When the times of Israel were over, the times of the Gentiles came in. All nations took the place and inherited the privileges of the one nation. And all lands were included in the covenant, as the rightful possession of the Lord and His people: "Ask of Me, and I will give thee"—the land of Canaan? No—"*the heathen* for thine inheritance, and *the uttermost parts of the earth* for thy possession." Just as the privileges of the narrow Israel of the old covenant have become the privileges of the wide Israel of the new, the whole "Israel of God"; so the duty of the little Israel to subdue the little land of Canaan has been translated now into the duty of the great Israel to subdue the wide world, making all its kingdoms "the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ." And just as the natural Israel was called to subdue its land in a quite natural manner, viz., by

carnal weapons of warfare, the sword and the spear; so the spiritual Israel on the other hand, is called to subdue the world with spiritual weapons, "the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God," in fulfilment of the great commission: "Go ye into all the world and *preach the Gospel* to every creature." The conquest of Canaan by the sword was intended to be a type of the conquest of the world by the Word. Has it not been a loss to the Church that this thought has been so much obscured by the almost invariable use of Canaan as a type of Heaven? This may be justified to a certain extent, but when it is claimed as the mind of the Spirit, we cannot but raise such questions as these: If Canaan be a type of Heaven, who are the Canaanites in Heaven? Where are the Hittites? And what is the slaughter to be? The Jordan is a favourite, and not inappropriate, type of death; and inasmuch as Canaan lay beyond the Jordan, Heaven is naturally suggested; but to make this slight analogy the ground of our exegesis, is to lose the main purpose both of Numbers and of Joshua. The intention of the book before us is not to set us looking upward and forward to the heavenly rest, but to nerve us for the great enterprise in which we are engaged, the great warfare to which we are called. The grand thing we have to set before us is the subjugation of the world for Christ; and *after* we have done what we can in that great warfare, then it will be time for us to think of our rest.

By keeping this in mind much light is thrown upon passages in this book which would be otherwise inexplicable. Let me refer to one in particular, that remark-

able passage in the fourteenth chapter, where, after the people have turned away from the conquest to which the Lord was leading them, being discouraged by the report of the spies, and "demoralized" by unbelief and resulting cowardice, and after Moses has interceded on their behalf, "the Lord said, I have pardoned according to thy word, but as truly as I live, *all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord*" (xiv. 21). Now, what connection have these remarkable words with the case? Some interpreters do not attempt to show any connection. Others signally fail in making the attempt. And there can be nothing but failure so long as the relation between the conquest of Canaan and the filling of all the earth with the glory of the Lord is not recognized. But as soon as it is recognized, how natural and how striking is the Divine declaration. The failure of the people seemed to carry with it the failure of the Divine purpose. But no. Though this generation had refused to go and possess the land, another generation would be found to do it; and not only so, but that other and much greater "far-off Divine event, to which the whole creation moves," and of which the occupancy of Canaan was a type, would as certainly come to pass in its time: "as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord."

In the first chapter there is the numbering according to their pedigrees, and in the second chapter the marshalling according to their standards, of the hosts of Israel. The appropriateness of this is so obvious that we need not dwell on it. But what are we to make of the third and fourth chapters? They are fully taken up

with priestly and Levitical arrangements. Are we back again in the book of Leviticus? Or is there any confusion in the book before us? By no means. A little thought will make it very plain.

We are not to suppose that when a book is closed, the subject is over and done with. On the contrary, whatever has been gained is carried on as a stored acquisition into the next stage of the history. The voice of God upon Mount Sinai ceased to speak after the revelation of Exodus was closed, but the substance of what He had spoken was embodied in the Tabernacle, which, as we have seen, was the foundation of all that is contained in the book of Leviticus. In the same way the voice of God from the Tabernacle was no longer heard after the Levitical ordinances were completed, but the substance of it was embodied in the organized priesthood and the Levitical services, which went on. And just as certainly as without the Tabernacle of Exodus there would have been no Leviticus, so certainly without the Levitical ordinances there would have been no properly organized Host of the Lord. An ordinary army of so many thousands strong there might have been; but it would not have been the Lord's army. The sacred character and Divine relations of the host must be maintained and conspicuously manifest. Hence the importance attached to the Levitical and priestly arrangements in the order of encampment (chap. iii.) and of march (chap. iv.)

From this point of view it is exceedingly instructive to take a survey of the camp of Israel. In the centre of all was the Tabernacle. Ranged around it were the tents of the people in two squares, a small inner and a

large outer square. The inner square was formed of the tents of the Levites, the families of Kohath on the south, of Gershon on the west, of Merari on the north, while Moses, Aaron, and the priests were stationed at the east, at the door of the Tabernacle. The outer square consisted of the tents of the warriors of the different tribes, three tribes on each of the four sides. The Tabernacle in the centre—there is the embodiment of the Sinai revelation in Exodus. The inner square of the priests and Levites—there is Leviticus. The outer square—there is the host of the Lord, whose setting forth to war is the subject of the book of Numbers. It is noteworthy in addition, that the Levites in this book are reckoned amongst the warriors, as will be seen by a reference to the margin, which is the literal translation of iv. 23, 30, and viii. 24, 25, where the service of the Levites is spoken of as the warfare which they had to war. True, they were not to be engaged in actual fighting, but the people were not allowed to forget that the worship in the sanctuary was quite as essential as actual service in the field to the success of the armies of Israel. They were never allowed to imagine that it was a mere matter of fighting, dependent on the number and effectiveness of the troops. Everything depended on the sacred character of the host, and that character was maintained by the inner square of the Levites and their ministry in the sacred enclosure. Just as Moses, with Aaron and Hur beside him to stay up his hand, was a most essential part of the host that defeated Amalek at Rephidim (Exod. xvii. 11, 12), so the priests, with the Levites who stayed up their hands, were a most essen-

tial part of the host who went forth to subdue the land of promise (see also Num. iv. 3). In the same way the prayers of the Church at home are essential to the success of the soldiers of the Cross in the distant field. While then there is a certain propriety in speaking of the camp as consisting of "a nation of warriors, a tribe of workers, and a family of worshippers," it is a much more important truth to remember that the entire camp was one, that the twelve tribes were expected to be workers and worshippers as well as warriors, and that the tribe of Levi and even the family of Aaron had a right to be considered amongst the warriors as well as those who formed the outer square in the camp, and did the actual fighting in the field.

The necessity of preserving the special sacredness of the camp is the thought which runs through the fifth chapter. The general principle is laid down in the beginning of it, that the camp of Israel must be kept pure from all defilement: and the special case which follows, and which was probably an emergent case, may be regarded as illustrating the principle.

In the sixth chapter, on the other hand, provision is made for cases of special consecration. The entire camp must be a consecrated camp; the entire army a consecrated army; but, while purity and consecration are needed for all the duties which appertain to the Christian warfare and service, there are occasions when service of peculiar difficulty, and calling for special qualifications, is required; and it is to provide for such emergencies that the law of the Nazarite is promulgated. The ordinary service has already been provided for in

its two great departments: in the field, by the warrior host (chaps. i., ii.) with their princes over them (i. 5–16); and in the sanctuary, by the band of Levites with the priests of the family of Aaron over them (iii., iv.) But for extraordinary service the special consecration of the Nazarite (vi.) is called into requisition.

The regulations for the camp are most appropriately and beautifully closed with the priestly benediction, pronounced by Aaron and his sons in the name of Jehovah of hosts: "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." The threefold blessing is in beautiful harmony with the three leading thoughts which, as we have seen, find expression in the three books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers, and were moreover embodied in the camp of Israel with its three divisions: the Tabernacle in the centre, the inner square of priests and Levites, and the outer square of warriors. There is first the Fatherly protecting care, as of Him who came down upon Mount Sinai and made a covenant with His people there: "The Lord bless thee and keep thee." Then there is the closer access which was provided for in the Levitical ordinances, implied in the next benediction: "The Lord make His *face* shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee." And lastly, there is the countenance which is given to the great enterprise in which they were engaged, a warlike enterprise indeed, but one waged for the sake of the true and lasting peace which should be the ultimate result: "The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee *peace*."

We do think that it is pressing the threefold blessing too far to see in it an intentional and express foreshadowing of the doctrine of "the Trinity"; but just as the successive revelations which God gave His people on Sinai, from the Tabernacle, and for the March, correspond to some extent with His revelation of Himself in redemption as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; so does the threefold blessing, following the same line of thought, conform itself to the thoughts of blessing which are specially appropriate to our Redeemer God in the Trinity of relations in which it has pleased Him to reveal Himself to man. "The Lord bless thee, and keep thee,"—is not that the Fatherly idea? "The Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee,"—does not this lead us to think of "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," and of "the gracious words that proceeded out of His mouth"? "The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace,"—does not this remind us of the special mission of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, to bring peace to the troubled soul?

But whatever we may say of the Trinity, the Unity is very clearly marked: "And thou shalt put *My Name* upon the children of Israel; and *I* will bless them." The unity of the camp also is strikingly signified in this.* In the chapters which precede we have been reading of different houses, different pedigrees, different standards; different ranks and different orders; different positions and different duties; different degrees of con-

* So also in the use of the pronoun *thee* in the benediction.

secration even; but now all the differences disappear, all sectional names pass out of view; and the name of Jehovah is all and upon all. "They shall put My name upon them"—upon Reuben and Simeon and Levi and Judah; upon Kohath and Gershon and Merari; upon priests and Levites; upon worker and warrior and worshipper; upon each of them, and all of them, they shall put My Name; "and I will bless them." And in the same way *we* may have our different names and different standards, and yet all belong to the same great army. Those only who refuse to acknowledge their brethren of other denominations mar the unity of the Church and are guilty of schism. A Reubenite did not need to renounce the tribal name of Reuben, nor a Kohathite his family name of Kohath, to justify his position in the army on which the One Name of the Lord was placed: and in the same way we do not need to surrender our distinctive names, indicative of differences of little moment, so long as we all gather round the Tabernacle of the Lord, worshipping Him as He has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ and by His Holy Spirit, and glorying above all, far above all party or tribal designations in that One "Name which is above every name,"—JEHOVAH JESUS.

XVI.

THE MARCH.

NUMBERS VII.–XIV.

NOW that the camp has been carefully ordered and the blessing of the Lord pronounced upon it, it is time to think of setting out on the great expedition. The next great subject, then, which engages our attention in the book of the armies of the Lord, is *the preparation for the march.* The account of it is given in chapters vii.–x. 10.

First, there is a series of offerings. Even on this sacred expedition "the sinews of war" cannot be dispensed with. Before the march begins there must be, not a levy, no tax, but a freewill offering—not, however, as we shall see directly, for the expenses of the campaign, but for the Lord's house and worship. The idea seems to be that the people of their own free will should give for the service of the sanctuary, while He of His exhaustless resources will take care of the service in the field. Is it not the same still? He does not send His people a warfare on their own charges. He first gives us the privilege of bringing an offering to Him. And then, whether our offering be great or small, if only it

be according to our ability, He on His part guarantees all needful provision for us. "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat *in mine house*, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

The offerings of the princes are recorded in the seventh chapter. The people of God are expected to give in proportion to their ability; and accordingly the princes of Israel set the example. There is first a general contribution (ver. 3–9); and then a separate contribution from each (ver. 12–89). The remarkable thing about this record is, that though each prince gave precisely the same, all the details are repeated for each one, so that there appears at first sight to be a very needless waste of words. Why was not this immense chapter of 89 verses put, as it well might have been, in a few lines? But think a little, and you will not consider even this a vain repetition. In the first place, great importance was attached to these acts of worship, for acts of worship they were considered to be, as is evident from verse 84. This is manifest from the spreading of the presentation over twelve days, each prince bringing his offering on a separate day. The very same reason which made it desirable that the separate gifts should be brought on separate days, made it proper that the record of them should be kept separate, and brought as near in impressiveness as possible to the original ceremony. And then, is there not this encouraging lesson to be learned from it, that it is not so much the gift as the giver that the Lord has in

view? What though the gift be the same, the giver is different; and therefore let him by all means have his place in the Divine notice and remembrance, exactly as if he had been the only man that brought it. Our gifts, however small, are never lost in the multitude of offerings. The Lord notices each one, and He rates it at its proper value, not according to its intrinsic worth, but according to the evidence it furnishes of the love and devotion of the giver.

It is also worthy of note that we have in this record a very obvious indication of contemporaneousness with the event. No later writer would have thought of making such entries as these.

The offering of the people is recorded in the eighth chapter. But is not that chapter all about priests and Levites, priests lighting the lamps (ver. 1–4), and then consecrating the Levites (ver. 5–26)? True; but did not the tribe of Levi represent the firstborn (iii. 40–51)? And were not the firstborn the people's offering to the Lord? So accordingly we find it in the record: "Thou shalt set the Levites before Aaron and before his sons, and *offer them for an offering unto the Lord*" (viii. 15). And the same view of the ceremony is again presented, along with the explanation concerning the firstborn whose place they took, in verses 15–18. It will be remembered, of course, that there was not only a surrender of the whole tribe of Levi from the number of the field force, but there was also the assumption of all those charges which were necessary to maintain the entire tribe, so that they might be free to do the service of the Lord in the sanctuary. It was then an offering, not of

men only, but of means, and as such fitly follows the offerings of the princes.

After the presentation of the offerings comes the observance of the Passover (ix.) The Passover, it will be remembered, was the starting point of Israel's national history. It must also be the starting point of their march to the land of promise. What the cross of Christ is in the New Testament, the Passover was in the Old. It was the most concentrated expression of the Divine love, and as such supplied the strongest impulse to courage and faithfulness in the service of the Lord. Hence the importance of the Passover observance before setting out on their arduous expedition.

The great majority of the people had already kept the Passover on the regular day (ver. 5); and that was considered near enough to the time of setting out, which was only a month later. But there were some who, on account of disqualification, had not been able to join with the rest in that celebration; and it was for them that a special Passover service on the fourteenth day of the second month was appointed. And not only was this special appointment made, but a general rule was adopted in future for the benefit of those who, for no fault of their own, had been deprived of the privilege at the appointed season. All this goes to show the great importance which was attached to this observance, especially as a preparation for arduous duty and difficult service. And inasmuch as the Lord's Supper has come in the place of the Passover, may we not learn from this how thoughtless and sinful it is to make so little of the sacred ordinance, as many even of Christian people do.

And now that all had given to the Lord, and all had partaken of the Lord's Passover, it remains only to give the signal for starting. The Divine will in the matter was intimated by means of the pillar of cloud and of fire. No step was to be taken without this Divine token. The passage in which this is set forth (ver. 15–23) is well worthy of earnest consideration, especially as teaching the importance of implicit and unqualified submission to the Divine guidance. It was according to the commandment of the Lord they abode in their tents, and according to the commandment of the Lord they journeyed. If they were directed to rest by day, they did it; if they were told to journey by night, they did it. However tired of travel, if the word was to set out, they obeyed. However weary of waiting, if the word was to stay still, they stayed. "Whether it were two days, or a month, *or a year*," it was all the same. If only we would allow ourselves to be so guided by the Lord, how invincible should we be, how inestimable the value of our service in the field. If only Israel had followed on in the spirit in which they evidently began, how different would the history of the book of Numbers have been.

The Divine will, as indicated by the pillar of cloud, was made known to the host by the blowing of two silver trumpets (x. 1–10) by "the sons of Aaron, the priests" (ver. 8). These trumpets were used, not only to give orders for the march, but to summon the people to the feasts, and for other important purposes, when it was necessary that the mind of the Lord should be communicated at once to the entire congregation. In place of the pillar of cloud and fire, we have the Spirit of the

Lord; in place of the trumpets, we have the Word of the Lord. And in our service it is just as important that we should be ready at the call of the Spirit given through His word, as it was that the hosts of Israel should be obedient to the trumpet-call in the desert.

So much for the preparations for setting out. And now the trumpets sound, and *the march* begins "on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year" (ver. 11), counting of course from the Exodus. The order of the march is given. Judah takes the lead; and the prince who marched at the head of the leading tribe was Nahshon, the son of Amminadab, ancestor of the Messiah (Matt. i. 4), Who is our Leader as we advance to the conquest of the world (Matt. xxviii. 20). The priests and Levites with the sacred things were distributed in an orderly and equal manner throughout the host as they marched onward, the Ark of the Lord being in the centre, immediately followed by the tribes of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Benjamin, which explains the allusion in Psalm lxxx. 2. The Ark, however, seems sometimes, perhaps only at the first, to have gone in advance, "to search out a resting-place for them" (ver. 33).

The words of Moses, when the Ark set forward and when it rested, are in full keeping with what we have shown to be the idea of the book, as that not of a journey through a wilderness, but of a warlike expedition, an army advancing to battle and to victory. When it set forward, he said, "Rise, Lord, and let Thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate Thee flee before Thee." When it rested, he said, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel." Warfare comes first;

rest follows. Now is the day of the Church militant; but the day of the Church triumphant shall come, when the Lord shall return to the "ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands" of the true "Israel of God."

So far all is well and hopeful; but no sooner has the march begun than it becomes apparent that the children of Israel are but children yet. The eventful year at Sinai has come and gone, with all its rich and wonderful experiences and its blessed revelations; but after all, the people are much the same as they were, ere they camped before the mount. The wilderness history on this side Sinai is wonderfully like the history of the wilderness on the other side.

For this reason I do not intend to dwell on the chapters which follow. They are very rich, and full of valuable instruction in their details, much of it such as can be obtained from no other part of Scripture so impressively. But as our plan restricts us to the broad general features, which are much the same as those we had in the lecture on the wilderness, we propose now to pass them by with the briefest notice.

Some think that the first sign of unbelief appeared in the asking of Hobab to go with them, that he might be to them instead of eyes (x. 31), as if the eyes of the Lord were not sufficient. We are not disposed, however, to see anything wrong in this, not only because it is Moses himself who makes the request of Hobab, but also because we are again and again taught that dependence on the Divine direction does not supersede the use of natural means.

But from the beginning of the eleventh chapter onwards, we have a series of murmurings and complainings and consequent judgments, which delayed the host on its march and disqualified it more and more for the great enterprise on which it had embarked. There was first the complaining at Taberah, and the disastrous fire which marked the Lord's displeasure at it. Then the lusting at a place which, in memory of the scene and the terrible judgment which followed, was afterwards known as Kibroth-hattaavah, "the graves of lust" (chap. ix.) The sad history of Miriam's sedition, supported by Aaron himself, who seems to have been weakly led by his stronger sister, is given in the twelfth chapter, while in the thirteenth we have the sending of the spies, the discouraging report of the majority, and the consequent unbelief and apostasy of almost the entire congregation. This last manifestation of unbelief and disobedience brought matters to a crisis; and the long-deferred sentence was passed, recalling their commission as the hosts of the Lord, dooming them to a weary wandering in the wilderness, and postponing till the next generation the entrance of the children of Israel into the promised land.

The wanderings of the rejected generation will form the subject of our next lecture. Meantime, let us look at the crowning sin which sealed the fate of the promising army, which had been so carefully numbered and marshalled at the base of Sinai.

It was the sin of unbelief. This had been the root of all their evils. Everything had been done that could be done to develop their faith; and yet when the great crisis comes, when the time has arrived to enter the land

which the Lord has promised them, and which they are to subdue for Him, they show that instead of being "a kingdom of priests," a people who know that the God who made heaven and earth and sea is their God, and therefore nothing can withstand them when they advance in the power of His might, they have not the courage even to make the feeblest attempt. "Let us make a captain," they said, "and let us return into Egypt" (xvi. 4). And though Joshua and Caleb made a noble and most courageous appeal (ver. 6–9), reminding them that with the Lord upon their side they had no cause to fear, it was worse than lost on them; for "all the congregation bade stone them with stones" (ver. 10). This was the climax of their unbelief. They were paralysed with fear of the sons of Anak, though the Lord was with them; they were not afraid to turn against Joshua and Caleb, though they must have known that in doing so they were resisting God Himself.

It seems almost incredible; and yet when we think of it, it is only too natural. It is important to remember that faith is a plant of slow growth. It cannot be suddenly summoned into existence on a special emergency; and in order to its development there must be not only "evidences" presented from without, but a discipline going on within. We are apt to think that because so many deliverances have been wrought for Israel, therefore their faith must have become very strong. We forget that though God had done His part all the way through, they never had done theirs. Their faith was really utterly unexercised. It is not faith, to trust in God *after* He has wrought deliverance. That was all

they did. If they had ever learned to trust Him *before* the deliverance came, it would have been a different thing. They had had abundant opportunities for the exercise of faith; but they had let them all pass by. They had contracted a habit of distrust. And instead of becoming stronger in faith, they were actually getting weaker; and accordingly when the crisis came, it was only what was to be expected that their courage should utterly fail, simply because it had no faith to rest upon. How shall we stand the test when *our* day of crisis comes? The answer will depend on the antecedent question, how we have improved those opportunities which have been previously given for the development of our faith. "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much."

"Weighed in the balances, and found wanting." After all their advantages they missed the prize. The appeal of Joshua and Caleb was the last opportunity; they never had another. "The glory of the Lord appeared" (ver. 10), no longer to open up a way for them, but to frustrate their rebellious attack on His two faithful servants, and to pass sentence of condemnation on the entire congregation. Through the mediation of Moses, the lives of the people are spared; but they are degraded from their position as the hosts of the Lord. "Because all those men which have seen My glory, and My miracles which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted Me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to My voice, surely they shall not see the land" (ver. 22). "To-morrow turn you, and get you into the wilderness" (ver. 25).

After it was too late, they changed their minds: "Lo, we be here, and we will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised: for we have sinned." Moses warned them that in doing so they would be only adding to their guilt and ensuring defeat; but they would persist. They would not go, trusting in God; and now they will go, trusting in themselves. "Then the Amalekites came down, and the Canaanites which dwelt in that hill, and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah."

"So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." "Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it."

XVII.

THE FORTY YEARS.

NUMBERS XV.–XIX.

"FORTY years long was I grieved with this generation." The forty years includes the whole time between the Exodus and the Entrance. And certainly there was no part of the time during which the Lord had not occasion to be "grieved with this generation." But the time specially referred to is that of the wandering, after the sentence had been passed excluding from the land of promise the generation that came out of Egypt, and before the next one had grown up to take the place of their unbelieving fathers. This period covered thirty-seven or thirty-eight years. Two months only were occupied in the journey to Sinai (Exod. xix. 1), ten in the giving of the Sinai revelation (Exod. xl. 17), and one in prescribing the ritual of Leviticus (see Num. i. 1), making one year and one month in all. Deuteronomy begins with the eleventh month of the fortieth year (Deut. i. 3); so that the entire book of Numbers covers a space of thirty-eight years and nine months.

But there is by no means a consecutive history of that period in the book. Twenty days only were con-

sumed before the march began (Num. x. 11); and the journey from Sinai to Kadesh could not have occupied a very long time, and was probably reached in the autumn of the same year when the grapes were ripe (xiii. 23). On the other hand, the twentieth chapter has for its date the fifth month of the fortieth year, since it records the death of Aaron, which took place at that time according to the itinerary in Numbers xxxiii. (ver. 38); so that between the fifteenth and the twentieth chapters there must have been a gap of about thirty-eight years. And this is confirmed by the statement in Deuteronomy ii. 14.

The first thing that strikes us is the silence of Scripture concerning the history of that long period. Ten chapters about the doings of twenty days in the beginning of the book; and in the middle of it we have only five about the doings of thirty-eight years! And these five chapters, as we shall find, relate only one event of importance, and that one anything but creditable — an event that would have been more honored in the omission than in the recording. Practically, then, the thirty-eight years are passed over in silence. A most significant silence indeed, and full of weighty and impressive lessons for the prople of God in all times. We have seen that the date of the Exodus was the starting-point of their national history. All the years before were counted out and consigned to oblivion. Only when they turned their backs upon Egypt and began to follow the Lord did they, in the proper sense, begin to live. And for the same reason, when they turned their backs upon Canaan, they ceased to live. They *existed*

still. They made a living in the desert. But God has no place in His book of remembrance for those who only make a living, who are simply occupied with self-preservation, and fail to do the work which He has appointed.

It will be remembered that on the day when they came out of Egypt a new name was given to the people: "And it came to pass, at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all THE HOSTS OF THE LORD went out from the land of Egypt" (Exod. xii. 40). And again, in the last verse of the same chapter: "And it came to pass the selfsame day, that the Lord did bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt *by their armies*." It was on that "selfsame day" that they began to live: "This shall be to you the beginning of months." From that time onward, through all their murmurings and rebellions, they never entirely lost their standing as the hosts of the Lord. They had followed on in the way the Lord had led them from Succoth to Sinai. They had, after the brief apostasy of the calf worship, faithfully followed the Divine directions in regard to the Tabernacle and its worship, and the ordering of the camp. From Sinai to Kadesh, though murmuring and unbelieving still, they were nevertheless obedient in following the lead of the pillar of cloud and fire; and their faces were ever directed towards the goal which the Lord had set before them. But now—they have refused to advance and have even attempted to stone the two faithful witnesses, through whom the Lord was addressing to them His last appeal; and accordingly they can no longer be

considered the hosts of the Lord. An army they have ceased to be, and are only so many Bedouins of the desert. Why should their doings find any longer a place "in the volume of the book"?

The same principle is no doubt followed still. It is true, indeed, that the canon of Scripture has long been complete, and there is no place in the Bible now for even the most valiant doings of the soldiers of the Cross. But God has a book of remembrance which shall one day be opened; and in it shall be found written all that is worthy of memory in the doings of His Church. In that record there shall no doubt be many gaps like this in Numbers—years of precious time that might have been full of great things done for the Lord, blank, or worse than blank, with nothing in them that is not discreditable. This will be the case with all those years during which, as Christians or as Christian Churches, we only exist, without advancing, without making fresh conquests, and hastening the time when "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord" (Num. xiv. 21). He may not indeed utterly cut us off, just as He spared the lives of that unbelieving generation. He may, and no doubt will pardon, just as He pardoned them (ver. 20), if we are His people at all; but then, it will be given to others (ver. 31) to do the work and enjoy the honour which we have put from ourselves. Alas, even for the Christian Churches and Christian people who relinquish their service in the field, and content themselves with simply making a precarious living as wanderers in the desert!

From what has been said it is very evident that we

may pass rapidly over these chapters. The fifteenth is quite remarkable as illustrating the unchangeableness of the Divine purposes, notwithstanding all the failures of those who have been honoured with an appointment to carry them out. When the sentence was pronounced which excluded the whole generation from the land, these significant words were added: "Ye shall know my breach of promise." The promises of God are all "yea and amen." There can be no breach of promise with Him. But if those who have been appointed to carry out His designs refuse the honour, there is that which seems a breach of promise so far as they are concerned. They are the losers. They forfeit the privilege and the reward, and incur the condemnation. But the purposes are carried out none the less certainly. And this is strikingly suggested in the very beginning of the chapter: "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, *When ye be come into the land* of your habitations, which I give unto you," etc. He had just told them that not one of them would ever set foot in it. And the very next message is, "when ye be come into the land"! "All flesh is grass . . . . the grass withereth . . . . but *the word of the Lord endureth for ever*."

It is possible that these directions, in view of the entrance of the next generation into the land of promise, were given in mercy, in order to make it evident that though the sentence of exclusion could not be reversed, yet the Lord had "not cast away His people whom He foreknew." It may be a sign also that a better spirit had begun to manifest itself in them, a spirit

which disposed them to acquiesce in the propriety of their own exclusion, and to cherish the only pleasant prospect that was now left them, the prospect of their children enjoying what they had lost.

The following chapter gives the history of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. When it happened there is no means of telling. Quite probably it was after some time had elapsed, and the people had become utterly discouraged by the inactivity and hopelessness of the dreary years that were passing over them. Having nothing to do, they found mischief ready to their hands. The selfish ambition of the three chief conspirators found material enough to work upon in the inactive and discouraged multitude.

The ostensible grievance is one which seems to have some foundation: "All the congregation are holy, every one of them." That was true enough. Was not the whole nation called to be "a kingdom of priests"? No one could deny it. It is often the case that party watchwords are everything that can be desired; but whether the parties themselves are, is another question. There will be a great principle emblazoned on the flag, and the very meanest and most selfish motives in the hearts of those who carry it.

Moses dealt with the alarming conspiracy with his usual wisdom, and in the same lofty spirit which we have seen him manifesting on similar occasions. We find him first on his face before the Lord (ver. 4), and then, without the slightest assertion of authority, leaving the whole matter in dispute to the Lord's decision (ver. 5), while, at the same time, he gave the leaders to

understand that he recognized the selfish motives which really inspired the rebellion (ver. 8–11). And then, when the decision was given, and the judgment of God was about to fall (ver. 21), again we find him on his face before the Lord, pleading with all the earnestness of his mighty nature for the people whom He loved so much, in spite of all their ingratitude and sin, and anon making atonement for them, until the plague was stayed.

As the matter in dispute had been the right of Aaron and his family to a priesthood distinct from that of the entire nation, care was taken, after the excitement of the conspiracy and the judgment which followed had calmed down, to give such a testimony to the Divine right of the Aaronic priesthood, as should set the matter for ever at rest. Hence the proceeding recorded in the seventeenth chapter.

An objection has been taken to this chapter on the ground that after the testimony which had been given in the suppression of the conspiracy, and the terrible judgments with which it was accompanied, there was no need of further witness; and, accordingly, some have said that evidently this narrative is out of its place. But a very little consideration will show how shallow this objection is. There are some very important respects in which the testimony given by the budding of Aaron's rod was very much needed in the circumstances.

In the first place, there is that thought already suggested, that the witness of the preceding chapter had been given in a time of great excitement, and for that very reason was less fitted to make a lasting impression.

But besides, it was associated with death and judgment, whereas the priesthood was appointed for life and blessing. This was beautifully symbolized in the budding rod of Aaron. And accordingly we have in the witness of the seventeenth chapter, not an arbitrary sign, but an expressive symbol, which conveys valuable instruction in relation to the characteristics of those who have a right to be considered true priests of God. Apply it, for example, to ourselves. We are all called to be priests under the new covenant. What are our credentials? What title has any particular congregation, of progressing Christians, for instance, to be considered as belonging to the Church of God, the Divinely accepted priesthood? "By their *fruits* ye shall know them." Look at these rods of the princes. Do they not seem as good as Aaron's rod? Better probably, if anything. They may have been more costly and more attractive looking, being rods of the princes. But wait awhile. Give time. After the interval has passed, look at them again. The rods of the princes are just as they were before. They are not broken or damaged in any way. There they are, everything right and proper about them, apparently. But look at Aaron's. Behold it has "budded and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." There is life and growth and fruitfulness there. The rods of the princes were dry sticks. The rod of the priest was a living and fruitful branch. So, too, there are many Christian people and Christian congregations that are dead and dry, while others are continually sending out buds and bearing fruit. The latter only have the title

to be ranked among the genuine priesthood, or to assume the prerogatives of the Church of God.

The chapter which follows (xviii.) is a continuation of the same subject. It lays down the law in detail, in regard to the question in dispute. That question was settled *de facto* in the sixteenth, *de jure* in the seventeenth, and now as a matter of law in the eighteenth chapter. There is an adjustment of the priestly and Levitical duties (ver. 1–7), a setting forth of the rights and privileges of the priests (ver 8–19); and of the perquisites of the Levites, with their corresponding obligations (ver. 21–32).

The ordinance of the red heifer, which is detailed in the nineteenth chapter, is also closely connected with the conspiracy against the priesthood. The mortality in the camp had been unusually severe (see xvi. 49; xvii. 13); and, in consequence, it must have been specially burdensome for those who were defiled by necessary contact with the dead to bring the appointed sacrifices. For such persons the regulation concerning the ashes of the heifer would bring great relief, affording as it did a means of purification ready to hand.

But while this rite of purification was appointed to meet the necessities of the emergency, it is as full as any part of the ordinary ritual, of important truth concerning the way of cleansing through the great Sacrifice of the New Testament. Here, as elsewhere, we have the strong sacrificial foundation with its already familiar elements: the choice of an animal without blemish, the killing, the sprinkling of the blood "before the tabernacle of the congregation," the burning without the camp.

The special feature of the new ordinance is, in the means taken to make one sacrifice available for an indefinite number of cases. This was done by the concentration, so to speak, of all the elements of the sacrifice in the ashes, which were to be preserved. Here we have the explanation of the casting "into the midst of the burning of the heifer" of "cedar wood and hyssop and scarlet" (ver. 6). These represent the appliances for sprinkling: the hyssop stalk with scarlet wool wrapped round it, fastened on a piece of cedar wood, which was held in the hand. By the casting of these into the burning, the idea of sprinkling was, as it were, perpetuated in the ashes which were the residuum of the whole. These ashes could of course be preserved and used for an indefinite time; and each time they were used, the ideas which had, so to speak, been burnt into them, would be impressed upon the minds and hearts of the devout. The ashes then represented the power of a past sacrifice; and accordingly we have in this special ordinance a better shadow than almost anywhere else of the blessed truth of the new covenant, that the Sacrifice once made never needs to be repeated; but remains of undiminished efficacy to the end of time. To adapt a well-known sentence of the poet, "even in its ashes live its former fires."

The use of the running water with the ashes (ver. 17) has the same significance as in the ritual for the cleansing of the leper, which we had before us in the fourteenth chapter of Leviticus.

In making application of the ordinance of the red heifer to ourselves, we find it specially instructive in re-

gard to the restoration of that communion with God, which ought to be the chief joy of the Christian, and which is too often broken by the contracting of stains, so difficult to avoid, with sin "reigning unto death" all around us. There are those who under these circumstances feel peculiarly discouraged. They have the impression that it must be exceedingly difficult to get back to their former position. They remember how long it took them at first to be reconciled to God; and they think how much more difficult it must be now that the evil has been allowed after the experience of God's saving grace. It seems a long and hard way back; and they have not courage to begin again. It is a mistake. The way back again is not long and hard. There are the ashes of the heifer and the running water close at hand. There need be no delay, as if a new animal must be obtained, and brought to the priest, and killed at the altar, and so forth. There is a shorter way. Look back to the Sacrifice offered long ago once for all. There is the running water of the Word, which has in it, as it were in solution, the strong ashes of the Sacrifice. There for evermore is stored the virtue of that blood which "cleanseth from all sin." There need be no delay. For the ashes and the water, we have the cross and the Word; and all that is wanted is the immediate use of God's "perpetual statute for purifying the unclean"; "for if the blood of bulls and of goats, *and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean*, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall *the blood of Christ*, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without

spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. ix. 13, 14).

We had occasion to remark in the early part of this lecture, that there was only one incident of importance recorded during the thirty-eight years of wandering, viz., the rebellion of Korah. But as we have seen, many things have grown out of it which were of lasting value, especially the mediation of Moses and the forgiving mercy of God, the witness of the budding rod, and the valuable ordinance of the red heifer. Thus it is that God "makes the wrath of man to praise Him," and uses even his most sinful outbreaks as occasions for magnifying the glory of His grace. The forty years left nothing to the credit of Israel; but brief and scanty as its notices are, they are full of value as part of the revelation of "God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself."

XVIII.

THE NEW DEPARTURE.

NUMBERS XX., XXI.

THE fortieth year is now running its course. The time of the curse has nearly expired. The old generation has almost passed away. And now preparations may be begun for entering a second time on the march to Canaan, where a new generation must vindicate the claim of Israel to be indeed "the hosts of the Lord," by taking possession of the land of promise.

It was at Kadesh that the sentence had been pronounced which doomed their fathers to these dreary years of wandering. It is at Kadesh again that the camp is reorganized. It seems likely that during the interval there was no definite aim or object before the people, so that they moved about as suited their convenience or necessities, very much as the wandering tribes of the desert do still. This would lead to a relaxation of discipline and order in the camp, and more or less scattering of the people. Their unity was indeed to a certain extent kept up, and their marching orders given as of old, probably at long intervals. So at least we would infer from the itinerary in Numbers xxxiii.; but there must have been no little disorganization and

dispersion, rendering it necessary that there should be a reassembling of the forces. For this purpose no place could be better or more appropriate than Kadesh, not only because it must have been so familiar to all, but also because, by making it their point of departure they resumed the thread that had been broken by the unbelief of their fathers. The total loss of the long interval of time, moreover, is more distinctly marked by the gathering of the people together at the old halting place.*

There is a striking contrast between the new departure and the old. The first began with the numbering and mustering of the armed men, and all the bustle, activity, and energy of a youthful host setting out to victory. The second seems to have a much less hopeful beginning. The twentieth of Numbers is one of the saddest chapters in the book. It begins with the death of her who had been the leader in the song of victory on the shores of the Red Sea. It ends with the death of him who had so long been the honoured representative of Israel in the Holy and the Most Holy Place. And, between the two, we have the old story of murmuring on the part of the people, and mercy on the part of God, but with this sad addition, that Moses himself has a fall —a fall so serious that it leads to his own, as well as Aaron's, exclusion from the land of promise.

It seems a hopeless beginning indeed. But was there not something hopeful in its very hopelessness? Recall

* It is not our province to discuss geographical questions, or we should here deal with the dispute as to whether there are not two places of the same name. The best authorities seem now to be in favour of the view which is here presented.

that scene of wrestling at Peniel, when the patriarch Jacob gained the new name of *Israel*. How did he gain it? By his own strength? Nay. It was through weakness that he was made strong. It was when his thigh was out of joint, when his power as a wrestler was utterly broken, that his hope of victory began. Power with God is what is needed to secure victory; and in order to this, there must be first a realization of our own weakness. This was Israel's experience at the Jabbok. It was also the Apostle Paul's: "Most gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." This will illustrate what we mean, when we say that there is something hopeful in the very hopelessness of this chapter. Its great lesson is, "Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?" "Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

And this prepares the way for the great lesson of the next chapter, which may be expressed in the very words which follow the passage just quoted from the one hundred and forty-sixth psalm, "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." This most valuable lesson is taught in three successive experiences.

First, the victory over Arad (xxi. 1–3). In the beginning of the contest Israel had been defeated, and some had been taken prisoners. This event indeed properly belongs to the time of the twentieth chapter, for the encounter with Arad must have taken place before the

death of Aaron, as all the commentators point out; but there seems to be a double reason for reserving the account of it to this place: First, the desire on the part of the historian to keep together the closely related events of the deaths of Miriam and Aaron, and the sentence which excluded even Moses from the promised land; and next, the fact that inasmuch as the defeat was retrieved and victory gained in the end, it belongs really to that brighter side which opens up after the great lesson of human weakness and mortality has been sufficiently impressed. And here it is important to notice that the victory was not given to Israel until after they had realized how utterly unable they were to gain it for themselves, and had accordingly come with vows and prayers to the Lord. Then it was that "the Lord hearkened unto the voice of Israel, and delivered up the Canaanites; and they utterly destroyed them."

The second experience was one of deliverance from death. Here, again, there is first a time of humbling disclosure: "The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way" (ver. 4). Then came the usual murmuring, for the sin of the fathers has evidently descended to the children; then the plague of serpents, with dreadful stings producing fiery inflammation that resulted speedily in death. Then the humble confession and prayer: "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that He take away the serpents from us." This is the turning-point—an acknowledgment of weakness, sin, and need. And immediately the Lord "shows His salvation in the sight of all the people." "The

Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live."

We all know the use our Saviour made of this incident, treating it as a type of the great salvation which He wrought out for sinful men: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." In the serpent's bite, the poison of which pervades the whole frame of the victim, and causes death, we recognize a vivid symbol of sin. And in the remedy, too, there are obvious points of analogy. In both cases it was provided by God Himself. In both, the way of cure had a peculiar relation to the disease. By fiery stinging serpents came death; by a serpent of brass, made in the likeness of the fiery serpents, but without their sting, came life. In the same way, as "by man came death," so by One who was made "in the likeness of sinful flesh," but without that sin which is "the sting of death,"—by Him came life eternal. In both cases, the means of cure was simply looking—in the one with the bodily eye; in the other with the eye of faith. In both cases the object, to which the eye must be directed, is "lifted up"—in the one case on a pole; in the other on the cross (see John xii. 32). In both, salvation is offered to all without exception: "every one" (Num. xxi. 8), "any man" (ver. 9), "whosoever" (John iii. 15). In both, life was the reward of looking; death, the inevitable consequence of refusal. These points might be developed, but time will only allow of their suggestion.

The third experience meets the discouragement of the people because of the way, which is referred to in the fourth verse. No wonder they were discouraged. Travellers tell us that the desert of the Arabah, through which they were then passing, is the very worst part of all the routes of travel through the Sinaitic peninsula, the heat of the long, dry, desolate valley being intolerable. No wonder they were "discouraged because of the way." When the discouragement led to murmuring and repining, the only result was the plague of fiery serpents; but now that there has been repentance, and the journey has been prosecuted in a more humble and believing spirit, lo! in the midst of the desolation there appears — a well. "Then Israel sang this song" (ver. 17). There is not a great deal of poetry in the song. It has not the ring of the Red Sea song. There was no Miriam to sing it now; and we may well imagine that even Moses had not the same poetic fire which he had in his younger days. But, though there was less poetry and probably less music too, there was plenty of heart in it; and therefore it has a place, and a most honourable place, in the Lord's book of remembrance. The dreariness of the desert would be speedily forgotten; but who could ever forget the well and the song?

And now the people are ready to do battle for the Lord. They have well learned the two great lessons of their own weakness and the Lord's resistless might; and accordingly they may advance even against Sihon, king of the Amorites, and the mighty Og, king of the giants of Bashan. The easy defeat of these two

potentates, and the occupation of their land, are recorded in the remainder of the chapter.

Before we leave this very interesting part of the book of Numbers, we must call attention to some rich veins of truth we have had to pass over, but which will repay the diligent worker.

One is, the history of the sin and punishment of Moses and Aaron. Here a difficulty presents itself. It seems a very hard sentence for a very light offence. Not only does the offence seem slight in itself, but more especially in comparison with previous offences. In the case of Aaron, we cannot help thinking of the golden calf and Miriam's sedition, in both of which discreditable transactions he took a very guilty part. And even in the case of Moses, does it not seem as if his unbelief and impatience, as recorded in the eleventh chapter of this same book (ver. 10–15), were much more censurable than his conduct on this occasion?

Looking first at the case of Moses himself, we ought to remember what a critical time this was, when Israel was taking a new departure; and what special care he ought to have exercised at this juncture to have his testimony unclouded by any weakness or faithlessness. The responsibility of Moses' position was great at all times; but it was perhaps greatest of all at this particular time. This important element in the case must not be disregarded. But besides this, we cannot but notice that the impatience which he manifested at Kibroth-hattaavah was in the presence of the Lord Himself, and not before the people — a very different thing. There, he was wrestling with God in private. Here, he is

standing in the eye of all. Is there not some reference to this in the very words of the sentence: "Because ye believed Me not, *to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel*, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them."

Looking next at the case of Aaron, is there not something in this, that whereas, on former occasions of unfaithfulness, he had Moses to come as mediator between him and his deserved punishment, on this occasion he was deprived of his brother's powerful intercession? Here Moses cannot answer for himself, and therefore cannot act as mediator for his brother. The fall of Moses carries that of Aaron with it.

Besides all this, it is important to remember that we can never judge of evil from the mere appearance it presents to the onlooker. God has always elements in view which are hid from us. Sometimes these hidden facts may be of such a nature as to palliate very much that which seems to us utterly inexcusable. Sometimes they may be such as to make a seeming fault into a real crime. We "judge according to the outward appearance," because we can do no better; and therefore we are continually making mistakes in our judgment. God always "judges righteous judgment"; for He looks, not simply on the face, but into the heart of things.

Another rich field for exploration is the passage which tells us, in a style of simple grandeur, of the death of Aaron. The old man died majestically. He had many faults; but the root of the matter was in him. And when the time of crisis came, he showed that what

was deepest in his character was good and true, brave and strong. Without a question or a murmur, he climbs the hill, resigns his priestly garments to his son, and breathes his last upon the mountain top. No death-bed scene is spread before us in the simple record of his end; and yet there is something in the way it is told, that suggests the happiest thoughts concerning it. "Aaron shall be gathered to his people." "*Gathered*," not cast away. You gather that which you intend to *keep*. Gathered "*to his people*." From this side, it seemed a separation from his people. From the other side, from the Divine and heavenly point of view, it was a gathering to his people. The home land is there. This is the place of separations. There, is the place of reunion. There was mourning on earth for thirty days (xx. 29). There was joy in heaven for ever.

It is quite likely that about this time Moses composed that touching Psalm, which stands unrivalled as a *Thanatopsis*, from that day to this. In speaking of the Song of the Well, we remarked that Moses would not now in his old age have the poetic fire of earlier days. But what he may have lost in fire he has gained in pathos, and grandeur, and tender practical piety. Peerless in all these respects is that nineteenth Psalm, which is happily so familiar that it is not necessary to quote its words. Read it clause by clause, and you will see how appropriate every thought in it is to the solemn time when the last men of the old generation are dying out, and God is saying to the next, "Return, ye children of men."

XIX.

BALAAM.

NUMBERS XXII.–XXV.

THE children of Israel are at last gathered in the plains of Moab on the eastern side of the Jordan. The two great enemies who had barred their progress, Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan, have been utterly overthrown. But now Moab, which up to this time has been friendly, or at least not hostile, is thoroughly alarmed, and takes measures in combination with Midian, a neighbouring Arabian people, for the destruction of Israel. These measures are quite characteristic and natural from their point of view. The Midianites were descended from Abraham, and the Moabites from Lot; and hence it is quite probable that they had some knowledge of the remarkable history of the most favoured branch of the stock of Abraham. And this, coupled with what they had witnessed since the Israelites entered their territory (for it was in the territory of Moab that the battle was fought with the king of the Amorites), would give them at least a dim perception of the truth that it was Divine, not human power, which secured their dangerous rivals these great triumphs. Hence the resolution to invoke what super-

natural aid they on their side could command. This they did by sending messengers to Pethor, in the far east, unto Balaam, the son of Beor.

This Balaam was evidently a great prophet of the time, whose fame had extended far beyond the region where he lived; and his reputed power of drawing down blessings or curses from above, was so great, that the confederates entertained the hope that through him they could neutralize the peculiar power which was evidently wielded by Moses, as the prophet of Jehovah, God of Israel (xxii. 5–7). We have not the materials for determining what title to the position of a prophet Balaam had previous to this time. The probability is that he was in many respects a superior man, with illumination enough to seize and present not a little of that common heritage of truth which had survived the several stages of corruption; and quite possibly he was used of God for the purpose of doing good among the ignorant and degraded people around him. Indeed, his subsequent utterances, unless we suppose him to have been the subject of an inspiration which entirely superseded the use of his own faculties — a most unlikely supposition — give evidence of an intimate acquaintance with some of the most important parts of the Hebrew Scriptures, so that we may without improbability regard him as a worshipper of the true God in that far-off land, and yet one who had by no means shaken himself free from the corrupt influences around him, as is evident from his subsequent career.

There are two parallel lines in the history of Balaam, which, unfortunately for him, were like parallel lines in

this also, that they never met, and though produced to infinity, never can meet. These are his conduct and his words; how he acted and what he said. His conduct was of the meanest; his words were of the noblest that ever came from mortal lips. Alas! how often do these two—noble words and ignoble conduct—run on alongside each other in the life of man; and never meet. The words abide; the man, identified not with his words, which were from him, but not of him, but with his conduct, which was the true expression of himself, perishes for ever.

"*The way of Balaam*" (2 Pet. ii. 15) and the words of Balaam are really two different subjects. It is with the latter we have chiefly to do. But before entering on these most remarkable prophecies of his a few words by way of suggestion may be attempted in relation to the former.

And here we might notice first, *the entrance* to the way, the root of all the evil. It was his "loving the wages of unrighteousness" as the Apostle Peter puts it —not unrighteousness itself, only its wages. Could he have had the wages without the work, he would have been better pleased. But he loved the wages more than he hated the unrighteousness. The great lesson at this point is that which our Lord presses so earnestly, "Take heed and beware of covetousness."

Then *the way itself*—the rise and progress of the evil, of which covetousness was the root. How gradually the downward path slopes at the outset. When the temptation is first presented, he carries the matter to God, as was most right and proper; and he gets the de-

cided answer: "Thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed." This was the crisis. Had he allowed the matter to end here, as he ought to have done, all would have been well. But he still allows the bait to keep dangling before his excited imagination; and accordingly, though in form he refuses to go with the messengers, he yet couches his refusal in such terms, and probably gives it in such tones, as to suggest a second attempt with a larger bribe. And when the second deputation comes, instead of dismissing them at once, he parleys with the temptation, and though his words have a very brave and virtuous ring in them (ver. 18), his heart is set upon going still. And accordingly the Lord allows him to go; but warns him at the same time, that it must be for the very opposite purpose to that for which Balak wants him. He sets out, neither on the one hand with the determination to oblige Balak and defy the Lord, nor on the other hand to obey the Lord and disregard Balak; but in a confused kind of way hoping to combine the two opposite courses, so as to save himself so far as the Lord was concerned, and yet get the money from the king of Moab. This explains the singular experience he has by the way, and his otherwise inexplicable conduct when he reaches his destination. This double-mindedness continues till we lose sight of him again, after he "rose up, and went, and returned to his place" (xxiv. 25). But it is gone when we meet him in the last stage of his history.

This leads us to the third point: *the end* of the way The beginning of the way was loving the wages of unrighteousness; the middle of it was the seeking of them,

combined with an ever-weakening attempt to keep the path of righteousness while seeking the other wages; and now what is the end? "The wages of sin"; which is *death*. From the double-mindedness of the middle stage he very rapidly passed into whole-hearted wickedness. He took a prominent part in seducing the children of Israel to those iniquitous practices which are referred to in the twenty-fifth chapter (see xxxi. 16); and after doing the devil's work with a singleness of purpose he had never shown before, at last "utterly perished in his own corruption" (xxxi. 8). One of his wonderful *sayings* had been: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." These, and such as these, were his words; *that* was the end of his way.

In passing from the personal history of Balaam to his prophecies, let us notice the wisdom of God in the choice of His instrument. Could you conceive of any more striking way of manifesting the unalterable blessedness of the people whose God is the Lord, than is here taken —a blessing so great and so Divine coming from the enemy's camp, from a semi-heathen and wicked prophet's mouth, the marvellous issue of a conspiracy to curse between two of the greatest men of the time—could you conceive of any combination of circumstances more encouraging to God's people, and more fitted to extinguish the hopes of their enemies?

Now let us look at the prophecies themselves. There are four of them in all; but the fourth is quite separate from the other three, and must be left for separate consideration. The three are the several responses of Balaam to Balak's three solicitations, first, from "the high

places of Baal," then from the top of Pisgah, and lastly from the top of Peor. These three contain the blessing. The fourth is more strictly prophetic, setting forth what is to happen in the end of the days. It is not given at Balak's solicitation; but is, as it were, forced upon his unwilling ear as a wonderful appendix to the threefold benediction pronounced upon Israel.

Looking at the first of the three blessings, it is interesting to observe the reason Balaam gives why he cannot curse the people, much as Balak wishes it, and much as he himself in his inmost soul desires to do it. It is this: "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (xxiii. 9). This, as we have seen, is the special characteristic of the chosen people, their isolation, their separation from other nations for the worship of the true God. Thus Balaam, evidently inspired of God, puts in the forefront of his prophecy this very principle of separation which lay at the foundation of all the Divine dealings with Abraham and his seed, from the time that God addressed to him the call: "Come out from thy country and kindred, and I will make of thee a great nation."

The blessing closes with these remarkable words, already quoted in another connection: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." Some take this to be a mere personal wish; but we believe it to be more. "The righteous" in the original is almost a proper name, being nearly identical in form and in meaning with the word Jeshurun, which we find in poetical language applied to Israel. When we remember this, we see that the form the blessing takes is very

striking. This mighty man from the East not only blesses when he was expected to curse, but is so carried away with the magnitude of the blessing, that he longs for a share in it himself! And is it not worthy of remark, in view of the prevalent idea that a blessed immortality was quite foreign to the thought of the Mosaic era, that the peculiar blessedness of the people whose God is the Lord, is represented here, not as closing, but as culminating, at death?

In the second blessing (ver. 14–24), the leading thought is the presence of the Lord as a source of continual blessedness, safety, and strength. "The Lord his God is with him, and the shout of a king is among them." This presence of the Lord ensures *forgiveness* of sin: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel"; absolute *security* against the wiles of their enemies: "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel"; and finally, *victory* over all, set forth in imagery which recalls the language of the Shiloh prophecy in Genesis, and which is at the same time specially appropriate to the character of the warlike book of Numbers.

The third blessing (xxiv. 1–9) is the finest of all. Its central ideas are prosperity and victory. To appreciate its imagery, we must remember the exceeding value of water in the East, so that abundance of it is the best poetical image of prosperity and national welfare—also that Agag was the dynastic name of Amalekite kings, and that accordingly, inasmuch as Amalek was at that time "the first of the nations" (ver. 20) with which

Israel had to deal, Agag was the great representative of the power of the enemies of God's people (see Exod. xvii. 16). Here again we cannot but observe the prominence of the idea of the king and the kingdom, in full accord with what we have said in regard to the general features of the book.

We can scarcely pass from this threefold blessing without raising the question whether there is not a special significance in the triple form it takes. Does it not remind us of the threefold blessing pronounced directly upon the camp of Israel on the occasion of their first departure on the great expedition?* Are the following circumstances quite incidental or meaningless? In the first instance we are told (xxiii. 4) that *God* met Balaam; in the second (ver. 16) that *Jehovah* met him; in the third (xxiv. 2) that *the Spirit of God* came upon him. As usual, indeed, we find the names Jehovah and God interchanged throughout the narrative; but surely it is worth noticing that, in the formal statement of the communication established in each case between God and Balaam, He should be spoken of successively as God (suggesting the Father), Jehovah (suggesting the Son),† and the Spirit of God (the Holy Ghost). And are not the prominent ideas in the several communications quite in keeping with these distinctive names? In the first, the leading thought is that of *separation*, suggesting God's separation of Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees, and of Israel from Egypt, both of them for the purpose

* See Numbers vi. 23–27, and the close of XV.

† See Appendix on the name Jehovah.

of adoption as His children: "Come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you." There is the Exodus thought. In the second prophecy, the prominent feature is the *presence* of Jehovah, bringing forgiveness and securing victory. There is the Leviticus idea; which in the next age is expressed in the Incarnation, the Advent of Emmanuel, "God with us." In the third prophecy we have a succession of thoughts all suggestive of the work of the Holy Spirit in producing fertility, *growth* in beauty and in fragrance, as of trees planted by the rivers of water, culminating in that victory over all the nations which, as we have seen, is the leading thought of the book of Numbers. Can we fail to see in those successive benedictions "the love of God" the Father, who hath called us out from an unbelieving and lost world; "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" the Son, who came from heaven to dwell with man on earth, and at the same time to finish iniquity, transgression, and sin; and "the communion of the Holy Ghost," who is poured out as water on the dry ground, and by whose fertilising and life-giving power the people of God grow in beauty and fragrance and majesty, "as gardens by the river side, as the trees of lign aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as cedar trees beside the waters" (xxiv. 6).

XX.

THE STAR AND SCEPTRE PROPHECY.

NUMBERS XXIV. 15–24.

THIS last prophecy of Balaam occupies the same position in the Mosaic Era, that the Shiloh prophecy (Gen. xlix. 8–12), holds in the Patriarchal Era.* It is, as it were, an open eye, that looks out from the limited range of touch to the distant fields of vision, on and on till the point is reached where heaven and earth seem to meet and mingle. It will not then be out of harmony with the general plan of these studies, if we give to this striking prophecy something more than a passing notice.

We have called it the prophecy of the Star and Sceptre, from that which may be regarded as "the point of sight" in the vision; "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel" (ver 17). The Star and the Sceptre are symbols of royalty, the one of royal splendour, the other of royal power. The prophecy then heralds the coming of a king, who shall rise out of Israel, and is thus in manifest harmony with the special character of the book in which it appears.†

* See "Ages before Moses," Lect. XI.

† *Ibid.*, p. 248.

Who is the king? Some say David; and they are not altogether wrong. He was "a star out of Jacob," he was "a sceptre out of Israel"; and he did "smite the corners of Moab, and destroy the children of Sheth." He did cut down his enemies under him, and build up Israel's kingdom on the ruins of theirs. But this subjugation was only partial and temporary, and was very far indeed from exhausting this wonderful prophecy, which extends far beyond David's time, even on to the times of David's Lord, the King of whom the monarch of Israel was only a type. It was not till that later age that "the Star of Bethlehem" appeared, whose coming was so appropriately heralded by "His star in the east" which the eastern sages saw. Acquainted as these Magi undoubtedly were with this oracle of one of their own prophets of the olden time, no sooner did the star appear, than immediately they turned their faces to Jerusalem, with the eager question, "Where is He that is born King of the Jews?"

The symbol of the sceptre has already been associated with the coming of the King in the Shiloh prophecy of the earlier era. At first sight there appears a difficulty in the relation of the one to the other. As a rule, the course of prophecy is from the general to the particular; but here the order seems to be reversed; for in Genesis the very tribe is specified, while in Numbers the prophecy is not tribal, but national.

But when we take into consideration the different circumstances, we shall see very clearly the reason of this. Jacob was blessing his twelve sons, and in the course of benediction mentions what is special to each;

and accordingly, when he comes to Judah, he assigns him the peculiar honor of the tribe from which the Sceptre shall come. Balaam, on the other hand, has nothing to do with the separate tribes as such. He has to do with the Israelites as distinguished from the Moabites and other hostile nations; and accordingly he has no occasion to single out Judah, but simply refers to the fact that the coming King "shall rise out of Israel."

In this connection we cannot help remarking how this sceptre prophecy of Balaam confirms the view we took* on that sceptre prophecy of Jacob. We then called attention to the prevalent view of that prophecy, which makes it mean that the sceptre will continue with Judah till Shiloh comes, *and then depart;* so that the departing of the sceptre by the Roman conquest is actually taken as the fulfilment of the prophecy; whereas, as we endeavoured then to show in full detail, the idea is not that the sceptre will depart, but that it will never depart. Notwithstanding the fact that before the coming of the great Shiloh, the Prince of Peace, it will again and again seem to depart, it shall not utterly pass away till He come and take it up; and then —what? Depart? Nay, verily. "His dominion shall be an everlasting dominion." It cannot depart now; for He has come "whose right it is" (Ezek. xxi. 27), and "to Him—around His sceptre—shall the gathering of the people be."

Now, it is obvious that the prophecy before us con-

* See "Ages before Moses," Lect. XI.

firms this natural interpretation of the words of Jacob. If Shiloh's coming was to be the signal for the departing of the sceptre, why should Balaam speak as if it were the *rising* of it? This would make the one contradict the other. But take the natural and proper meaning of the earlier prophecy, viz., that Shiloh is to wield Jacob's sceptre for ever, and that to Him, and around His sceptre, shall the gathering of the nations be, — and there appears at once a beautiful harmony with the prophecy before us, which leaping across the dark vista of ages, declares, "there shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel."

The work of the coming King is represented in Balaam's prophecy as a work of destruction; He "shall smite" "and destroy"; His enemies "shall be wasted," "shall perish forever." Now this is certainly a very partial, not to say questionable, view of the work of Him who came above all to seek and to save. But it is that part of His work, that aspect of His mission, which is appropriate to the occasion of the prophecy, and to the book in which it finds a place. It was quite a different view of his work that was given in the earlier prophecy. There He was spoken of as *Shiloh*, the Prince of Peace, and a picture was given of the gathering around His peaceful sceptre of His loyal loving subjects. And this was most appropriate, as coming from the lips of an aged saint, who was just entering into his rest, and as addressed to one who was himself a loyal son of Israel. But here, the prophecy is uttered on the occasion of a wicked hostile attempt against the chosen people. It is addressed to the prime mover in that wicked-

ness, the leader of the armies which were marshalled in defiant array against the hosts of the Lord. It was uttered in full view of the seats and fastnesses of those numerous and powerful enemies of the Lord's people, whose countries were visible to the keen eye of—

"That seer of old,
Who stood on Zophim, Heaven-controlled."

Was it not in these circumstances most natural and appropriate, that the aspect of the King's reign *toward his enemies* should form the subject of this prophecy?

Besides this, it is important to remember that when translated into its New Testament equivalent, destruction by the sword becomes conversion by the Word, which is "the sword of the Spirit." "Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power"—a prediction which, you will remember, refers to New Testament times, and introduces statements closely parallel to those before us, that He "shall strike through kings in the day of his wrath" and "wound the heads over many countries" (Ps. cx. 3, 5, 6):—

"O Thou, Most Mighty, gird
Thy sword upon Thy thigh,
That two-edged blade, Thy Word
By which Thy foes shall die,
To be new born beneath Thine eye.
So perish all Thine enemies!"

When looked at in this its New Testament light, the difficulty naturally associated with the sanguinary strain of the prophecy disappears.

This leads us to the consideration of a point of great

importance. The enemies named for destruction are the Moabites, Edomites, Amalekites, etc. Are we to suppose that these particular nations, these necessarily and these only, are in the purview of the prophecy? Is there no reference, for instance, to the Philistines, though they are not named? And is there no reference to the "Philistines" of modern times? Is the prophecy dead and buried? Having lived once and served its purpose, has it passed away, or become at best a fossil, which perchance may serve as one of the many illustrations of the hand of God in history, as other fossils show His hand in nature? Or is it really a part of that Word which "liveth and abideth for ever"? The answer to this question will bring out a very important principle in the right interpretation of prophecy, which is often overlooked.

The best way to put the question so as to bring out the principle is this: What was it which determined the selection of these particular peoples, enumerated by Balaam as those who were to be destroyed by the coming king? Was it that these, and no others, were actually to be destroyed? Not at all. There are many prophecies strictly parallel with this where there is no such restriction. It seems evident that the names mentioned find their place in the prophecy simply because they were suggested by the circumstances; because the view the seer had from the top of the mountain supplied the materials which gave form to his inspired utterance. He extended his survey in all directions as far as his eye could reach, and brought in every hostile power that was at all suggested by anything he saw in the

wide field of his vision. And what did this mean? It simply meant that *all* the enemies of Israel and Israel's King should ultimately fall beneath His conquering sway. It meant that *no* weapon formed against Zion should prosper (Isa. liv. 17); that *all* kings should fall down before her King, and His enemies should lick the dust (Ps. lxxii. 9, 11).

The principle at the foundation of this is, that the prophets use language based upon facts and images of the present, and therefore within the range of the knowledge of the people to whom they spoke, to express great truths of the future; but it is putting the spirit in bondage to the letter to reject all application of the prophecy beyond the mere letter. What if some of these nations had passed out of existence before the coming of the sceptred King of whom the prophet speaks? Would the prophecy be falsified simply because that particular nation was not one of those which He conquered in the latter days? Not at all. That only belongs to the form of the prophecy. The spirit of it is that the Star out of Jacob, the Sceptre out of Israel, "He that shall have dominion" (ver. 19), shall overcome all His enemies, east, and west, and north, and south. And this is in full harmony with what we have found to be the ultimate design and grand idea of the book of Numbers. We have, in fact, in this last prophecy of Balaam concerning "the latter days" (ver. 14) another form of the earlier assurance, "As truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with the glory of the Lord," and an anticipation of many that are to follow, some of which combine both forms of presenting the truth; as, for example, in the second

Psalm: "Ask of Me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them in pieces with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

But though the literal scope of Balaam's prophecy was more limited than its actual range, it was nevertheless very extensive indeed. And it is wonderful now to look back upon it in the light of subsequent history. There was first the destruction of the neighbouring nations, any one of which might well seem at the time more than a match for the wandering Israelites; and they were all destroyed in the victorious progress of the people that were "not reckoned among the nations." Then there was the great eastern wave of conquest, rolling westward from the seer's own eastern land, which was to carry away on its surges not only the Kenites and other enemies of the chosen people, but the chosen people themselves: "Nevertheless the Kenite shall be wasted, until Asshur shall carry thee away captive." And more wonderful still, the great western wave of conquest which centuries later rolled eastward "from the coast of Chittim"; *i. e.*, from the direction of the isles of the sea which first meet the eye as it travels westward from Palestine toward the classic lands of southern Europe,—that great western wave of conquest which was to lay Assyria and all the east at the feet of Greece first, and afterwards of Rome, even *that* comes within the range of the seer's far-seeing eye. And not only so, but the overthrow of that great western power

itself; for he ends by saying that "he also shall perish for ever." Thus it is that first the enemies of the near south and north, and then the far more formidable foe of the remote east, and finally the mightiest and most terrible antagonist of all, from the still more distant west, fall one after another before the might of the rising Sceptre, and their glories pale before the rising of "the Bright and Morning Star"; and, when the vision closes, this glorious Star remains alone in view, this mighty Sceptre "does all the world command." And "on His vesture and on His thigh" is this name written: "KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS!"

Finally, what encouragement may we derive from this prophecy in the work to which, as the Israel of God, we are called? It may seem at times that the difficulties we have to encounter, and the enemies that counterwork our efforts, make the prospect very dark. But are these enemies mightier than the giant empires which rose in the future before the prophetic eye of Balaam as he stood on the top of Peor? What was little Israel to great Assyria, or greater Greece, or Rome the mightiest of all? Yet where is Assyria now? Where are the Greek and Roman empires now? And *where is the Star and Sceptre now?* Is not the Star brighter and the Sceptre mightier than it ever was before? And in the same way shall the enemies of the truth in modern times, near and far, related and unrelated, Romanism, ritualism, rationalism, infidelity, intemperance, vice in all its forms—go down at last before the rising Star and the all-conquering Sceptre. Let us, then, take courage in

that part of the work that is entrusted to us. Let us remember that we are most surely on the winning side. And let us not be "weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap if we faint not"; in due season we shall share in the triumphs of the King.

XXI.

THE SECOND MUSTER.

NUMBERS XXVI.—DEUTERONOMY I. 1.

WE are now rapidly approaching the close of the Mosaic era. We are reminded of this by the fact that one of the points from which Balaam blessed the people was Mount Pisgah. The long journeyings of the children of Israel are over; the hard fighting is about to begin. True, they have already conquered Sihon, king of the Amorites, and Og, king of Bashan; but these were only preliminary engagements on the border lands. The great work which they are called to do is to subdue the land of promise on the other side of Jordan. And already that land is in sight. It was full in view of Balaam when he pronounced his benediction on Pisgah; and in a very few weeks Moses himself will ascend the same mountain to view the land, and die.

But before he passes away, there are last duties to discharge and last words to speak. First among the duties was the numbering of the people for the second time. It must be remembered that of all the hosts that were numbered at the base of Mount Sinai, only two persons remain, Joshua the son of Nun, and Caleb the son of Jephunneh. It is an entirely different army; and hence

it was most appropriate that before the Jordan was crossed, and the great work of conquest began, they should be mustered and marshalled as their fathers were. As was to be expected, the numbers were not precisely the same; and yet the aggregate was so near the old one, that it was practically the same force in point of numbers as that which set out from the base of Sinai nearly forty years before. This second census is given in chapter xxiv. In the following chapter an interesting decision is given in regard to the rights of families represented only by daughters, the effect of which was to give these families equal privileges with those enjoyed by the families belonging to the warrior host.

The numbering over, and this question settled, Moses is informed that the day of his departure is at hand (xxvii. 12–14); and at once, without any thought of himself, he presents an earnest prayer that the Lord may provide a new shepherd for the sheep (ver. 15–17). In answer to this prayer, Joshua, whose courage and faithfulness had been so conspicuous on the occasion of the great defection, and who had been Moses' attendant in some of the most solemn acts of his long ministry, is fitly selected as his successor. It is worthy of notice, however, that the relation of the new leader to God is not so intimate as had been that of Moses. He was to "stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him after the judgment of Urim before the Lord" (ver. 21), which is quite in keeping with what is written in Numbers xii. 8 and in Deuteronomy xxxiv. 10.

The appropriateness of the ritual reminders in the chapters which follow (xxviii.–xxx.) will be seen when

we remember that, during the wandering in the wilderness, many of the ordinances of the law had, almost as a matter of necessity, remained a mere letter. It is evident that they were framed with a view to the condition of the people after they should be settled in the land; and some of them at least were of such a nature that they could not be observed in the wilderness. It was quite appropriate, then, that on the eve of crossing the Jordan, the people should be reminded of such obligations, and that the opportunity should be taken also for making such new appointments as the circumstances called for.

The war against the Midianites, recorded in the thirty-first chapter, was evidently of a special character. It was laid upon Moses as a last duty before he was gathered unto his people to "avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites" (ver. 2), or as it is put in verse 3, "avenge the Lord of Midian." It was not then a war of conquest, but a judicial punishment for the terrible wickedness of the tribe in the matter of Beth-peor. And this is the reason, no doubt, why the command was given to Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, who set out "with the holy instruments, and the trumpets to blow in his hand" (ver. 6).

The itinerary in chapter xxxiii. is of chief value in the efforts to fix the route of the Israelites; but the difficulty of identifying the places renders the task very doubtful and unsatisfactory. It is specially interesting in this respect, that in some small measure it supplies the great gap of thirty-eight years with a few names, which at all events throw a light bridge across the

chasm, and suggest the comforting thought that, though none of the doings of the people during these years were worth recording, yet they were never entirely forsaken or forgotten of the Lord. So far as the men were concerned, Joshua and Caleb bridge the two generations; so far as the history is concerned, these "journeys of the children of Israel," written out by Moses before his death, serve the same purpose.

The concluding chapters of the book are taken up with directions given through Moses, as to the distribution of the land. The territory on this side of Jordan which had fallen into their hands through the conquest of Sihon and Og, was given to Reuben, Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh, at their own solicitation; on condition, however, that, before they settle down, they should cross over with the rest of the tribes, and take their part in the great work which was to be done beyond Jordan (chap. xxxii.) The borders of the land for the other nine and a half tribes are marked out in chapter xxxiv., and certain princes of each tribe appointed to attend to the distribution.

It had been expressly arranged that the tribe of Levi should have no inheritance in the land. The service of the Lord was to be their inheritance. Yet they must live somewhere. Hence the appointment of the Levitical cities, forty-eight in all, with their suburbs, selected from all the tribes according to their size and wealth. Of these forty-eight, six were appointed for *cities of refuge*, three on the east and three on the west of Jordan. It is thought that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews has these cities in view when he speaks of

Christians having "fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us"; and there are some points of analogy between the asylum which the man-slayer found in the city of refuge that lay nearest him, and the safety which the sinner finds in Christ who is always near, and whose gate of mercy is ever open to those who repent and seek the salvation He freely offers.

The book of Numbers seems to end abruptly with the settlement of a side question, arising out of the regulations in regard to families represented by daughters only. The question indeed is of greater importance than it seems, for it has in it the great principle of the inalienability of the inheritance of all God's children. But besides this, it must be remembered that there is no gap between this book and the one following. The history proceeds right on. In the end of Numbers we have the last acts of Moses, and in the book of Deuteronomy we have his last words. It seems quite appropriate, then, that the book of Numbers should have no very obvious climax or consummation, but should pass naturally and easily into the one which follows, with nothing more striking at its close than the words of the last verse: "These are the commandments and the judgments which the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses unto the children of Israel in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho."

In this natural transition from the one book to the other, we have a confirmation of the traditional view, which after all the attempts that have been made in recent years to replace it by another more agreeable to rationalistic interpretations, remains the most natural

and the best supported, that Moses himself was the author of both books, certain passages excepted, notably that which reports his own death. But we shall reserve what we have to say on this subject to the next lecture. Observe only now, how natural it was that, after the second numbering of the people, he should a second time set before them the main features of that law which he had given to the former generation that were gathered at the base of Sinai. The *second muster* of the end of Numbers prepares the way for the *second law* in Deuteronomy.

XXII.

THE SECOND LAW.

DEUTERONOMY I.–XXX.

IT is the eleventh month of the fortieth year. It is the eleventh hour of the Mosaic Era. The great Lawgiver and Leader is about to be "gathered to his fathers"; yet "his eye is not dim, nor his natural force abated"; and of this he gives abundant evidence in the three long and spirited addresses which he delivers to the people as his parting charge.

In these addresses he urges the people, with all the force of his mighty nature, to be mindful of the Lord that has redeemed them, to be obedient to His law, and faithful to His covenant. They are, in fact, a powerful practical application of the Law which had been given on Mount Sinai. Hence the name given to the book which records these addresses: "Deuteronomy," the Second Law. The name is misleading, if it convey the impression, as it does to some, that it is only a repetition of what has gone before. In substance, indeed, it is the same, with some alterations and modifications, called for by the altered circumstances; but its form and purpose are quite different. The relation between the two may

be illustrated by the difference between a report and the speech of the mover of it. Both productions have the same substance; the report records, and the speech illustrates, the same facts; yet the two may be, and ought to be, quite different. At the same time, each is necessary and appropriate in its place. So is it in regard to the Law in Exodus and that which is called "the second Law" in Deuteronomy. The former is Moses' report; the latter is his speech in urging its adoption. And this accounts to a very great degree for the obvious difference in style.

This difference has been much insisted on as a reason for discrediting the Mosaic authorship of Deuteronomy. Yet how natural and even necessary was it that there should be just such variation. When a spirited secretary follows up his report with a speech to strengthen it, a similar difference is always discernible. But if we were to apply the reasoning of some of our critical doubters, we should have to conclude, either that the secretary had had some one else to write the report, or that he was delivering somebody else's speech. Even if the addresses in Deuteronomy had been delivered immediately after the giving of the Law in Sinai, we should have expected diversity in style; much more when an interval of nearly forty years had elapsed.

The critical questions which concern the book before us lie out of the scope of these lectures. Indeed, so large has the subject of the literary criticism of the Pentateuch become, that it demands separate treatment to deal with it at all satisfactorily; and to attempt to dispose of great questions in a few sentences here and

there, in a volume the object of which is expository and practical, would be to manifest an entire want of appreciation of the magnitude and importance of the subject. But inasmuch as a reference to the peculiar style of Deuteronomy has suggested the question of its authorship, it may not be out of place to make the general remark, that while there are unquestionable difficulties in the way of the time-honoured belief, these do not, when properly examined, appear to be nearly so great as those which are encountered on any other supposition as to date or authorship.

As to difficulties arising from particular passages, they have, in the first place, been greatly exaggerated; and, in the second place, it has been often forgotten that the belief in the Mosaic authorship does not exclude the supposition that certain passages may have been added by another hand at a later date; very much in the same way as when a new edition of some standard author is issued, it may have, in addition to the old text, new notes by the editor. And then, in regard to the greater reasons that are assigned by the negative critics for denying the Mosaic authorship, it will be found that they resolve themselves into the dogmatic bias against the supernatural which is common to them all. When, for example, we are told that the view of the Law as given in Deuteronomy could not have been the product of that early age, we are not careful to contradict the statement. We might, indeed, say that it is a very difficult thing to tell certainly what could or could not be the product of any particular age. But what if we assent to the criticism? What if we join with the objector, and

say, Most certainly these wonderful addresses in Deuteronomy could not have been the product of that early age? The question would still remain, as to what inference should be drawn from this; and here, as there, the dogmatic position would determine the issue. The inference of the man who has determined that everything which savours of the supernatural must be carefully excluded, would be that, inasmuch as they could not have been the product of that age, they must have been the production of a later age: the inference of the man who has no such prejudice to fetter his decision, would be that, inasmuch as they could not have been the product of the age, they may have come by "the inspiration of the Almighty."

The fact is, that the great difficulty which the destructive critics have to contend with, is the necessity under which they put themselves of leaving out God from all their reasonings. If they would only admit His presence and His freedom of action, most of their difficulties would disappear. But they will not believe in Him. It is, after all, the same fault as that which excluded the children of Israel from the promised land. Look at their reasonings on the report of the spies. They were thoroughly sound and sensible from a naturalistic standpoint. The single vice was the leaving the word and power of God entirely out of consideration. "So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief." The fate of the destructive critics is very similar. Rejecting God and His word, they are left to wander in the dreary, profitless waste of a criticism which is ever returning on its own footsteps, crossing its past

decisions, and never entering into any land that can support it more than a year or two at most.

The first of the three addresses occupies the first four chapters of the book. It dwells on the historical facts of the journey to the point which the people had now reached. From a survey of the past, Moses shows them, on the one hand, that all the sorrow and unprofitableness of the years that have gone, since God revealed Himself on Sinai, and made a covenant with their fathers there, have been the result of their unbelief in Him and unfaithfulness to the covenant; and, on the other hand, that their reaching their present position at all, is due to the faithful dealing and merciful guidance of the Lord. And on this, as a foundation, he urges, in the close of the address (chap. iv.), in the most earnest and eloquent language, faithfulness and obedience in the years that are to come.

The second address is much the longest of the three (chap. v.–xxvi.) As the first is based on the history and experience of the people, this one is founded on the Law, and therefore it may be considered as the Deuteronomy proper. It begins with a rehearsal of the solemn transactions of the first great day at Sinai, and then proceeds to the exposition and application of the Law, the spirit and method of which may be illustrated by the quotation of a short passage in the exordium. "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy

children, and shall talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates. And it shall be, when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which He sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive-trees, which thou plantedst not; when thou shalt have eaten and be full; then beware lest thou forget the Lord, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage" (chap. vi. 4–12).

One striking feature of "the second law" is suggested by the last sentence of the above quotation: "*when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land*," etc. This is explained by the peculiar position of Moses. The legislation of which he had been the channel had specially in view the ultimate settlement of the people in the land. Much of it was of such a nature that it could not come into operation until after the settlement. Yet, on account of his failure at Kadesh-Meribah, and no doubt for other wise reasons besides, the great lawgiver was not to be permitted to enter the land. That this was a very great disappointment to him is evident from what he tells the people in referring to it in his first address (iii. 23–27). His heart was set upon the land of promise; and yet his foot could not be set in it, nor his

voice heard within its sacred boundaries. How exceedingly natural, then, that in this address he should be continually anticipating the time when they should enter in, and that he should, as far as possible, say by anticipation what he would have said had not the sentence been pronounced which deprived him of the longed-for opportunity.

And so it comes to pass that this closing book of Moses has a distinctly prophetic aspect, not merely in the sense in which Exodus itself is prophetical, namely, as revealing the Divine will, but in the ordinary sense, as carrying the mind onwards to events which are still in the future. In this aspect it occupies a position in the Pentateuch very much like that of Daniel in the Old Testament and the Apocalypse in the New. And here we can see how truly barbarous it is to sever this book from the organism to which it belongs. As we have it, the Pentateuch is rounded and complete; it is a living unity; and to separate its parts is to mutilate and mangle it. In Genesis we have the soil and the seed; in the historical part of Exodus we have the stem; in the prophetical portion of the same book, in the priestly book of Leviticus, and in the kingly book of Numbers, we have the threefold development of the single stem as it branches out into three main limbs, one going right up from the central stem, and therefore finding a place in the same book of Exodus, and the other two spreading out on the right hand and on the left; in the closing book we have the blossoms and the fruit, not, however, actually gathered, for it is a prophetic book, but the thought and idea of that fruit in the mind of Moses,

who looked forward to the gathering of it after the people had come into the land to which the Lord was leading them.

Though "the near horizon" of the entrance into the land was that which Moses had immediately in view in the delivery of this long address, yet at times he catches a glimpse of a distant horizon, and speaks of far better things to come. The most remarkable instance of this is in the eighteenth chapter, where, after warning the people against "hearkening to diviners," of whom there would be an abundance when they came into the land, he utters this remarkable prophecy: "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken; according to all that thou desiredst of the Lord thy God in Horeb in the day of the assembly, saying: Let me not hear again the voice of the Lord my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And the Lord said unto me: They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee, and I will put my words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him";—a prophecy which was fulfilled in a very subordinate sense in the line of prophets from Samuel onwards, whom the Lord raised up in Israel, but which received its final fulfilment on that great day when, after the lapse of centuries, Moses at last visited the land of promise—on that great day when, on the Mount of Transfiguration, the two great prophets of the old covenant "appeared in glory" with the greater Prophet of the new. You remember how,

as the disciples gazed, "a bright cloud overshadowed" Moses and Elias, and Jesus was left "alone"; and from the cloud there came a voice, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; *hear ye him.*" Thus gloriously is the ancient prophecy fulfilled, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto Me; *unto Him ye shall hearken.*" Thus does the lawgiver and prophet of the ancient Israel, whose word has been supreme for centuries, gracefully give way to the Lawgiver and Prophet of "the Israel of God." Thus does the mediator of the old covenant wrap himself in the "bright cloud" of the heavenly "glory," and leave "Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant," "alone," as the great Prophet of humanity.

The third address is comparatively brief (xxvii. to xxx.); and just as the first address was founded upon the revelation of God, which was manifest in all the way by which He had led the people, and the second upon the law as given from the Mount, so the third was based upon the covenant transaction which followed the giving of the Decalogue with the "statutes and judgments." As the first law had been followed by a solemn ratification of the covenant when the altar and the twelve pillars were erected at the base of Sinai, so Moses gave directions for a still more solemn ratification when they should come into the land. The very day they crossed the Jordan they were to "set up great stones, and plaister them with plaister, and write upon them all the words of this law" (xxvii. 2, 3). These stones were afterwards to be "set up in Mount Ebal" (ver. 4), and an altar built there, and burnt-offerings and peace-offerings presented.

When the people were all gathered together, a series of blessings and curses,—blessings for obedience, and curses for disobedience,—were to be pronounced in the most solemn manner, to which "all the people must say, Amen"; and in relation to this we are told: "These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, beside the covenant which he made with them in Horeb" (xxix. 1).

In this address also the prophet's eye pierces to a horizon far more distant than that which confines, in the main, the field of his vision. But here it is a very different scene which meets his gaze. When speaking of the Law, that which the Lord gave, he looks forward, and his prophetic eye rests upon the great Gift which God has made to His people in the future, the gift of His Son to be the Prophet of humanity, and the "Mediator between God and man." But when speaking of the Covenant, that which involved the people's future, his eye rests upon the sad prospect of coming days of unfaithfulness and disobedience; and his solemn warnings almost insensibly pass into the form of terrible prophecies of coming woe. And yet he cannot pronounce the judgment without speaking of the mercy which there is beyond in the still more distant future. "And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, ... and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee, and shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with

all thine heart, and with all thy soul; that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee" (xxx. 1–3). And then follows a series of "exceeding great and precious promises," closing with a repetition of the earnest warning, and this intense protestation: "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live; that thou mayest serve the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey His voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto Him; for He is thy life, and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them" (xxx. 19, 20).

XXIII.

THE DYING SONG OF MOSES.

DEUTERONOMY XXXI., XXXII.

NOTHING now remains but a few parting words, recorded in the chapters which follow (xxxi.–xxxiii.), the most important being what may be called "the dying song of Moses." In chapter thirty-first the aged prophet announces his approaching death, adding appropriate encouragements and warnings; immediately after which he receives a commission to write a song and teach it to the children of Israel (ver. 19). The song is given in full in the thirty-second chapter. It is one of surpassing beauty and poetic power, full of grandeur and sublimity.

The subject of the song is, Jehovah and His people; and the substance of it is given in verses 3–6: "I will publish the name of the Lord: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He. They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of His children: they are a perverse and crooked generation. Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise? is

not He thy Father that hath bought thee? hath He not made thee, and established thee?" The faithfulness of Jehovah, the God of truth, the Rock of salvation; and the unfaithfulness of His fickle and foolish people,—such are clearly to be the main ideas of the song. In the after-development there are three things very powerfully set forth.

I. *What Israel owes to God* (ver. 7–14). Here the great things which God had done for them are brought out in a few bold delineations, mingling strength and pathos in a marvellous degree. He shows how from the beginning God had set His regardful eyes upon them, how He had guided the history of all other nations in a manner subservient to their welfare, making them and their development the historic centre of the ancient world; how He had found them poor, helpless wanderers in the wilderness, had formed them into a people there,—His own people, whom He had fed and led and trained as a tender mother might,—and at last brought into the goodly land He had promised them, exalting them high among the nations of the earth, and giving them all things richly to enjoy.

II. *How will Israel pay the debt?* To this question the prophetic song gives a sad answer. Israel will pay her debt of gratitude to God by base ingratitude—beginning with self-indulgence, and going on to neglect of Jehovah and the worship of strange gods. Such is the sad prophetic picture in verses 15–18. Thus Israel requites God. And now

III. *How will God requite Israel?* Almost all that remains of the song is taken up with the fearful answer

to this question, setting forth how God takes notice of it first, and is filled with indignation; how He hides His face and leaves His people to themselves and to the bitter fruits of their ingratitude; how He takes their precious privileges from them, and gives them to those who till then had been "no people"; how, finally, He lets loose on them all the fury of His vengeance, and utterly destroys their place and nation.

All this we find realized in history. "The sin of Judah," and their punishment too, have been "written with a pen of iron and with the point of a diamond" (Jer. xvii. 1). Do you ask for the fulfilment of the first part of the threatening, when God hides His face from His people and leaves them to the multiplied miseries and distresses which spring from their evil courses? You find it all through the Old Testament history. Do you ask for the fulfilment of the second part of the threatening, viz., the calling in of a people that had been "no people," while *they* were cast out with terrible judgments? Is it not found in the times of the establishment of the new covenant, the most prominent feature of which is the calling of the Gentiles? And how they were provoked to jealousy by it! The entire history of the founding of the Christian Church, especially in the light in which it is put by the great apostle, who again and again quotes the words of this song in connection with the calling of the Gentiles, is a fulfilment of these warning words of Moses: "They have moved Me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked Me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are

not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation" (Deut. xxxii. 21). And when you think of the judgment that so soon after came upon the Jews, ending in the disastrous destruction of Jerusalem and overthrow of the Jewish state, you see that never was prophecy more signally fulfilled, than was this song of judgment which Moses taught the children of Israel on his way to Mount Nebo to die. Is not the Word of God "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword"? Is not that a living sharpness indeed, which is not dulled by the lapse of fifteen hundred years? During this long interval the witness of "Moses the man of God" stands against Israel. During all this time the dark cloud which rose first, "like a man's hand," above the mountains of Abarim, hung over the chosen people. But the end came at last, and not a word of the witness failed; and the long-gathering storm-cloud spared not one volley of its thunder nor one stroke of its forked lightning.

All this is dark — very dark; but it is dark only to those who "forsake God, and lightly esteem the Rock of their salvation" (ver. 15). The very faithfulness of God to His most terrible threatenings is an additional reason why those who believe in Him should exercise most unshaken confidence in Him. If He whose name is Jehovah, "the God of salvation," whose nature and whose name is "Love," is inflexible in the fulfilment of His most terrible threatenings, how much more have we reason to suppose that He will be faithful to His most gracious promises! However much, then, we mourn for the unfaithfulness of the people, we who believe

have every reason to exult in the faithfulness of God, and, in our enthusiasm, to say with "Moses the man of God," "He is the Rock, His work is perfect: for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He" (ver. 4). "*He is the Rock.*" Just think of the light and the strength there are in this thought, which is repeated again and again and again up to nine times, in this dying song of Moses. What a history there is in this single thought; what a splendid relic of the rocky desert!* In this dying song of Moses we have the original of all those noble passages in psalms and hymns of believing Israelites in ancient times, and believing Gentiles of all nations in these later days, which represent Jehovah as "the Rock," "the Rock of Ages," "the Rock of our Salvation." Truly there is light here amid the darkness of this dying song.

Then, too, if you examine the song throughout, you will find it full of evidence of the goodness and long-suffering and tender mercy of the Lord. Though there is inflexible justice, both in the prophecy itself and in its fulfilment, yet throughout all it is evident that He speaks and acts, who "delighteth not in the death of him that dieth"; who "willeth not that any should perish, but that all should turn unto Him and live." Take as a specimen these words, coming in the midst of most terrible threatenings, "O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them,

* See Stanley's "Jewish Church," vol. i., p. 219.

and the Lord had shut them up? For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges" (ver. 29–31). And then, who can fail to perceive the brightness at the close, when the seer's wonderful prophetic eye takes within its mighty sweep not only "the bringing in of the fulness of the Gentiles," but the restoration of the Jews after their long dispersion? You remember these noble words of "the Apostle to the Gentiles," "I say, then, Have they," that is the Jews, "stumbled that they should fall? God forbid; but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead?" There is the fully developed doctrine; but we have the germ of it all in the magnificent close of this old song: "Rejoice, O ye Gentiles, with His people; for He will avenge the blood of His servants, and will render vengeance to His adversaries, and will be merciful unto His land and to His people" (ver. 43). Thus it is that, after all, "mercy rejoices against judgment," light prevails over darkness, and "death is swallowed up in victory." When we think of all this, we need not wonder that Moses should open this song with an exordium which, to a superficial reader, seems strangely out of character with the dark and dreadful contents of it: "My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass"

(ver. 2). And again, when we think of the vast issues which it contemplates, and the glorious results it foreshadows, we can enter into the enthusiasm of his soul when he first opens his mouth to speak: "Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth" (ver 1). It reminds us of the enthusiastic words of "the Apostle of the Gentiles" when the same panorama passed before his mind, and he concluded his lofty argument thus: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?"

We have looked at this song as a witness against Israel. This was doubtless its original design; but its scope is far wider. These things are "written for our learning" too. This song was written for a witness against all who enjoy Israel's privileges, and follow Israel's sins. It has passed into a proverb that "history repeats itself"; and we feel that this is true of the history which lies within the compass of this song. When we take the widest compass of the song, there can, indeed, be no repetition; for, as we have seen, it sweeps forward, at the close, to the grand consummation of God's Providential plan. But so far as the privileges, the neglect, and the punishment of God's ancient people are concerned, it is but too likely that its counterpart may be found among God's modern people.

Even among the Gentiles, though all are alike wel-

come, and exclusive privileges are now done away entirely in Christ Jesus, there have been and are those who are far in advance of others in respect to the advantages they enjoy. First came the Greek and Latin races, united in the mighty Roman empire. To them first, among the Gentiles, the Gospel was preached; and by them first, as a nation and race, was the Gospel received. Three hundred years had not passed away from the death of "Jesus of Nazareth" till the faith of "that same Jesus" was the established religion of the Roman empire; and not long thereafter the privileges of the Gospel were within reach of almost the whole of that vast population. In these times God "made His people to ride on the high places of the earth"; they had "butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs," and everything, in fact, that wealth could purchase. These were the times when even a Roman Emperor found it necessary, at the bidding of a Christian Bishop, to do public penance in penitential robes, and was afterwards found humbly soliciting from his spiritual superior, with sighs and tears, his restoration to the communion of the Church; a request which the haughty bishop was pleased to grant only after eight months' probation. And though this humiliation of the great Theodosius before the greater Ambrose of Milan was something extraordinary even then; yet the fact that such a thing was possible at all, shows to what a height of power and influence the Christian Church of the Greek and Latin races was raised in those times in the providence of God. What a change from the martyr days, the days of hiding in the catacombs! Was it not as true of the Christians

of the Roman empire as it was of ancient Israel, that God had "found them in a desert land," had "led them about," had "kept them as the apple of His eye," and had at last "made them ride upon the high places of the earth," and given them to "eat the increase of the fields"?

Well, how did the favoured people then pay their debt of gratitude? Was it not the old story over again? "Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked." They "waxed fat, grew thick, were covered with fatness; then they forsook God, and lightly esteemed the Rock of their salvation." They became self-indulgent, "earthly, sensual, devilish." Corruption of manners and corruption of doctrine set in "like a flood"; they turned to "strange gods"; they worshipped saints and relics, and bowed down to images; they adored the consecrated wafer. The very light that was in them became darkness, and "how great was that darkness!"

And as, before, the heritage of truth and blessing had passed from the Jew to the Gentile, so now it passed from the Roman to the Teuton. These Teutonic races of the north had been "no people" in the eyes of the empire of Rome. They had been known only as barbarians, both in the Greek and Latin tongues. Yet these "no people," these "barbarians," who had fallen one by one before the all-conquering might of Rome, became the very people who fell heirs to the legacy of Divine truth, and the great blessings which accompany its possession. For, though the Reformation seemed for a time to gain a footing among the Latin races also, it was only for a time; the hold of corruption was too firm for it to last,

and they all relapsed into the darkness from which at first they had seemed ready to emerge; while among the Germanic races the light of truth continued to shine and to diffuse itself over a widening area.

And now it is the Teutonic races who are in the position of Israel of old, and principally those who speak the English language. Who can tell what we who speak the English tongue owe to Jehovah, "the Rock of our salvation"? Where did He "find" us? Was it not "in a desert land" indeed—a very "howling wilderness"? See what the early Britons were when first they heard Jehovah's name. And how has the Lord "led" them since then? How tenderly did He "bear" our fathers on, teaching them by degrees the use of that liberty which has grown with Britain's growth, and strengthened with her strength, in—

> "That land of settled government,
> A land of just and old renown,
> Where freedom slowly broadens down
> From precedent to precedent."

What words could more truthfully or beautifully express God's dealings with us in this respect than these: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead them" (ver. 11, 12)? And how has He now "made us to ride upon the high places of the earth," and given us "the increase of the fields"? For is it not a patent fact that the destinies of the world are at this moment, under God, swayed by those who speak our mother tongue,

while the great mass of the world's wealth is in their hands? And all this we owe to Him who is "Head over all things." Not only our rich spiritual privileges, but even our temporal greatness, our position and power and wealth, in the world, we owe to Jehovah, God of Israel, "the Rock of our salvation."

Well, how do we "requite the Lord"? Is it not very much in the old way? Is not wealth breeding self-indulgence and luxury; and are not these leading us, as a people, to forget God, and "lightly to esteem the Rock of our salvation"? Are there not many "strange gods" among us: Mammon, Fashion, Pleasure? And what of this sad revival of middle-age superstition? Has not the sin of *Rome* been written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond? And why this haste to be partakers again of her sin, and of her plagues? "For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter; their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps" (ver. 32).

Oh! is not this song a witness against *us* too? It may seem strange that during all these fifteen hundred years throughout which it was witnessing against them, the Hebrews paid so little attention to this song; but is it not equally strange that we should give so little heed to it? God is long-suffering indeed; and it is well that He is, or where should we English-speaking people be to-day? But His long-suffering has a limit, as is evident from the past. "Let us therefore fear," and let us "watch unto prayer," on behalf of ourselves and our

brethren throughout the world, that God may pour out His Spirit upon us, and give us grace to be faithful to "the Rock of our salvation," so that it may never be necessary to "remove our candlestick out of its place," to "take the kingdom from us, and give it to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof"

XXIV.

LAST WORDS: THE END.

DEUTERONOMY XXXIII., XXXIV.

THESE chapters form an appendix to the Pentateuch. It is evident that Moses could not have recorded his own death and the mourning which followed it; so that the last chapter must be by a later hand, and it is quite possible that the one before it was also added after the death of Moses. The last thing which Moses himself records is God's command: "Get thee up into this mountain . . . . and behold the land . . . . and die" (xxxii. 49, 50).

The thirty-third chapter preserves "the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death." Like the dying song, it is rich in poetry and full of majesty. But we cannot stay to point out its beauties. We cannot even take up the blessings of the separate tribes, but shall only call attention to the last words, which speak of Israel as a whole, and tell in loftiest language "the blessedness of the people whose God is the Lord."

These words may be regarded as the crown of the Mosaic theology. The theology of the Pentateuch is marvellously comprehensive and complete. We are so

accustomed to look upon the five books of Moses as but a small part of the Bible, that we often fail to realize how complete a revelation it is in itself. We forget sometimes that there are very many now in heaven, whose whole Bible it was, who learned from it everything they knew concerning God, from the first rudiments of Divine knowledge up to full maturity like that of Moses himself, when, full of years and of honour, he closed the last volume of the Book of the Law. When we read in the Psalms those glowing eulogiums on the Law of the Lord, we are so accustomed to apply them (as it is right and proper that we should) to the whole Bible as we have it, that we forget they were spoken first, in honour specially and almost exclusively of this Pentateuch, which many Christians nowadays undervalue so much, and which some calling themselves Christians presume to reject as unworthy the credence of enlightened men of the nineteenth century.

We may not attempt in these concluding words to discuss the wide subject of the Mosaic theology. If we did, we should have to speak of the Unity of God, His Personality, the indications of a Trinity scattered here and there in greater numbers than a superficial reader is aware of, but which in no case interfere at all with the consistent testimony throughout to the indivisible Divine Unity; and, in a word, of the doctrine of God as "a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth." All of these doctrines, and many more of subordinate importance, we should find set forth in the Scriptures which have come down to us from the Mosaic era.

We may, however, call special attention to the full revelation of the Divine Love throughout the Pentateuch. We have had occasion already to combat a prevalent idea that God is revealed by Moses as a God of justice, while by Jesus He is made known as a God of mercy; that wrath prevails in the Old Testament, and love in the New. This is largely due to the misunderstanding of "the memorial name," Jehovah, which in the popular mind has become associated with thoughts of terror, whereas in the Pentateuch it is almost the synonym of Love. To the intelligent and instructed reader of the Old Testament, the blessed truth concerning the God of Israel, that His nature and His name is Love, appears on almost every page. We are apt to forget that the judgments of the Old Testament came only upon those who hardened their hearts in unbelief; and that they come as certainly and as severely on unbelievers now, as they did in the times of Moses. *As* severely, do we say? What do these words mean: "He that transgressed Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of *how much sorer punishment*, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God?" The only difference between the judgments of the Old Testament and those of the New is, that the latter are more terribly severe in proportion as the privileges are greater. And whether in the old or in the new, the *denunciation* of judgment is an expression of love; for it is the warning voice of affection, telling of the coming danger, and beseeching those exposed to it to "flee from the wrath to come."

From the beginning of this song before us we see how thoroughly "Moses the man of God" understood all this. There is first a grand description of God's descent upon Mount Sinai, ending with these words: "From His right hand went *a fiery law* for them." Now notice the words which follow: "Yea, He *loved* the people." Many seem to think that the revelation on Mount Sinai was intended above all things to strike terror into the people. Moses evidently does not think so. He takes it as it really was, a manifestation of love. It is an eternal truth that "God is love"; and this eternal truth was manifest, less marvellously indeed, but as certainly, on Sinai as on Calvary. When we think of all this, we have no reason to wonder that Moses should crown his theological utterances with words like these: "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy Help, and in His excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms."

The glories of Sinai are still in the old man's mind when he speaks of God's "riding upon the heaven, and in His excellency on the sky." But observe in what character the majesty of God presents itself to him. It is not as a dreadful thing. Not at all: "who rideth upon the heaven *in thy help*." Moses is a true *believer*. He knows that even that fiery grandeur of Sinai was in His people's help, and the same thought rises in his soul as sprung up afterwards before the rapt spirit of the great Apostle to the Gentiles, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Sinai has no terrors for the aged believer, whose feet are firmly planted on "the Rock of Ages,"

and who therefore can go singing to the mountain top to die.

But is not Calvary here, as well as Sinai? Or, at least, is not He who died on Calvary before the seer's eye? When Abraham stood on Mount Moriah beside the altar on which he had shown his readiness to sacrifice his all for God, his eyes were opened, so that he saw the day of Christ afar off, and was glad (John viii. 56). And surely Moses is no less highly favoured now that he is about to go up to Mount Nebo, to make his great sacrifice, to yield his life at God's command without reaching the goal of his life-long anticipation. There is no doubt that, however dimly, he too beheld from afar the day of Christ, and rejoiced to see it. He had been by the events of his time familiarized with the thought of the God of Jeshurun riding upon the heavens in His people's help; but where did he get the idea of that intimate nearness, that closeness of contact, which comes out in the words that follow: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and *underneath are the everlasting arms*"? Even the Tabernacle revelation had nothing in it to suggest a thought so tender, except in so far as it foreshadowed the incarnation and life on earth of the coming Saviour. To ride upon the heavens in their help was a glorious thing; but to walk upon the earth, to take little children in His arms, to stretch out these arms to all and say, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest"—this was something far better. And there is no doubt that the aged man of God felt it so, as he girded himself for his strange lone journey to the mountain top. Though "his eye was not dim, nor

his natural force abated" (xxxiv. 7), we may well imagine that it would have been with feeble, trembling steps he would have ascended the mount that day had he not known that the eternal God was his refuge, and felt that around him and underneath were the everlasting arms. It is this conviction that enables him to leave a requiem behind him, which shall echo through the ages, not in wailing for the dead, but in shouts of glad praise to the God of the living, the Rock of Jeshurun.

But it is scarcely doing justice to the majesty of Moses' death, to represent him as thinking of himself at all. It is true that he could not have manifested this noble calmness and fortitude unless he had known God as his own refuge, and felt that the everlasting arms were underneath *him*. But this is so absolutely certain, so unquestionable, so thoroughly taken for granted, that his thoughts do not seem even to advert to it. He has been so long accustomed to leave himself out of view, that he can well afford to do it once more in the supreme crises of his history. Two great thoughts quite fill his lofty soul in its last moments. The first of them is this: "There is none like unto the God of Israel" (xxxiii. 26); and the second is like unto it: "There is none like unto the Israel of God" (ver. 29).

Israel's God and God's Israel; the Saviour and the saved: are not these the two great factors of the Mosaic era? We have seen* that the great doings of God "when Israel was a child" make the grandest picture which the Old Testament affords us of the great salva-

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* See page 17.

tion. How appropriate, then, that we should find at the close of these records of the times of Israel's childhood so lovely a miniature, setting forth so beautifully the glory of Israel's redeeming God and the blessedness of His redeemed people.

How beautifully the echoes of the three books are heard in the closing strain of the fourth. Looking first at what is said of Israel's God, listen to *Exodus:* "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky"; immediately following which, we hear an echo of *Leviticus,* so softened and etherealized as it were, that we seem already to be in the New Testament, as the tender tones fall on our ears: "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms"; and the strain appropriately ends with the warlike notes of *Numbers:* "He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them."

So, too, in speaking of the Israel of God, the strain begins with the thought which lay at the foundation* of the Mosaic economy, that of *separation:* "Israel then shall dwell in safety *alone*"; and after touching on the same lofty conceptions as in the former stanza, with such variations in the language as the change of subject from the God of Israel to the Israel of God rendered necessary, he closes again with the thought of the hosts of the Lord advancing to conquer the "high places" of their enemies, through Him who was not only "the shield of their help," but "the *sword* of their excellency"!

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* See page 2.

The actual outcome of the Mosaic era fell far below the Divine ideal; but it is encouraging to remember that the people's failure to realize the glory and the blessedness the Lord had prepared for them was simply *their* loss. To all succeeding ages those blessed truths remain "as an heritage for ever," from the Mosaic era: First, "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms;" and next, "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!"

"For all *flesh* is as grass, and all the glory of *man* as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but THE WORD OF THE LORD ENDURETH FOR EVER. *And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you.*"

APPENDIX.

ON "JEHOVAH," "ISRAEL," AND "CHRIST."

[*Note.*— The author finds that in order to do justice to the important subjects reserved for the Appendix, an additional volume would be necessary ; and therefore, instead of attempting the formal treatment of them, he offers some of the most important *data*, with a mere statement of such conclusions as have the closest relation to the questions in the text which suggested the investigations.]

I. THE NAME "JEHOVAH."

N. B.—Wherever "Lord" in our Bible is in capitals, it is Jehovah in the original.

1. *"Jehovah" and "God" are different names for the same being.*—(See Genesis anywhere and the Old Testament generally.)

2. *While "God" is the general name, expressive of the relation of Deity to all His creatures* (Gen. i. 1), *"Jehovah" is the name expressive of some special relation,* as in the formula, "I am Jehovah, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." It is in fact the Covenant Name. Numberless passages might be cited, but it may be sufficient to refer to 1 Kings xviii. 21, and 36–39.

3. *The specific idea associated with the name is not that of self-existence and absolute Being, but love and mercy in general and salvation in particular, holiness being always present as a solemn undertone:*—Exod. vi. 6–8; xx. 2; xxix. 46; xxxiv. 5–7; Lev. xxvi. 1, 2 (*cf.* Exod. xx. 2); Lev. xxvi. 13, 44; Num. vi. 24–27; Deut. v. 6; xxxiii. 29; 2 Sam. xxii.; Psalms almost anywhere, *e. g.* Ps. xxvii.; Prov. xviii. 10; the prophets almost anywhere, *e. g.*, Isa. xliii. 11; Jer. xxiii. 6–8. In some cases the name is reduplicated, to give additional force to the thought, as in Isa. xii. 2 and xxvi. 4. (See margin).

4. *"Jehovah" and the "Angel of Jehovah" designate the same person:*—Gen. xvi. 7–13; xviii. 1, 2, 22; xix. 1;

xxviii. 13; xxxi. 11, 13; xxxii. 24, 30 (*cf.* Hosea xii. 4, 5); Gen. xlviii. 15, 16; Exod. iii. 2, 4, 6, (*cf.* Acts vii. 30–35); Exod. xiii. 21; xiv. 19; xxiii. 20, 21; xxxiii. 14, 15 (*cf.* Isa. lxiii. 8, 9), and so on through the Bible, *e. g.* Zech. iii.

5. *"Jehovah" of the Old Testament, and "Jesus" of the New Testament, is the same person:—*

(*a*) A just inference from 4 (*cf.* John i. 18).

(*b*) The promise and expectation of Jehovah's coming (satisfied in the advent of Christ): Gen. xlix. 18; Ps. xcviii.; Isa. xl. 1–11; xlv. 21–25; Jer. xxiii. 6; Mal. iii. 1.

(*c*) Numerous quotations in the New Testament, in which Jesus is taken as the person spoken of in the Old Testament as Jehovah, *e. g.* Heb. i. 10.

(*d*) The title "Lord" applied to Christ throughout the New Testament is the very word by which Jehovah is rendered in the Greek of the Septuagint (*cf.* the force of this in such passages as Acts xvi. 31; Rev. xxii. 20, 21).

(*e*) Express identification in New Testament: Mark i. 1, 2; Matt. xi. 3–6 (*cf.* Rev. i. 8 and xxii. 20); John xii. 41 (*cf.* Isa. vi.); 1 Cor. x. 9 (*cf.* Deut. vi. 16); Heb. xi. 26; xii. 25, 26; 1 Pet. i. 11 (*cf.*, *e.g.*, Isa. lxi.)

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE FOREGOING ARGUMENT.

I. The way is prepared for a consistent theory of the origin and meaning of the name "Jehovah," in accordance with that passage in Revelation which seems to be an expansion of it, where the Saviour speaks of Himself

as "the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come" * (i. 8). (See also Matt. xi. 3 and John viii. 58).

II. The entire Old Testament is lighted up and warmed by a Name, multiplied on almost every page, which has the same sweetness "in a believer's ear" as the much loved name of Jesus. How differently, for example, do the Psalms read! And then it is no cold, abstract idea, but the blessed fact that "God is Love," which is "My Name for ever and my memorial to all generations." (See Exod. iii. 15).

III. It makes conspicuously manifest the Divinity of Christ.

IV. It is the key to many perplexities in the Old Testament (*e. g.*, Exod. vi. 3), and by showing a wonder-

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* The tenses used in Exodus iii. 14 are what the old grammarians call the future, which would give the translation: "I will be what I will be"; instead of "I am that I am," which is probably due to the Septuagint, and the Alexandrian philosophy which ruled the rendering of that important passage. Several of the modern versions have the future, Luther's, *e.g.*, "Ich werde sein, der ich sein werde"; the Spanish of Valera, "Seré el que Seré"; the Swedish, "Jag skall wara, den jag wara skall"; etc. And there can be no doubt that the thought of the future is quite prominent in the Hebrew words, of which the emphatic present, "I am that I am," is so misleading a translation. Still, recent grammatical researches have so modified the views of earlier grammarians in regard to the Hebrew tenses as to forbid the absolute restriction, either to the future on the one hand, or to the present on the other, and to favour that indeterminateness in regard to time, which finds its best expression in the passage quoted above from the Apocalypse: "The Lord *which is, and which was, and which is to come*." The recent work of Driver on "The Use of The Tenses in Hebrew" affords ample materials to substantiate this view of Exodus iii. 14, though it seems to contain no reference to this particular passage.

ful harmony far below the surface, confirms the inspiration of the Scriptures.

V. It binds the Old and New Testaments in one harmonious whole as the Revelation of God in Christ. (See John i. 18; v. 39, etc.)

VI. By carrying the Old Testament name into the New as a title of the Saviour, it gives continued expression to the fact that He in whom we trust, is still a coming Saviour. (See especially Rev. i, 8 and xxii. 20, 21.)

II. THE NAME "ISRAEL."

1. The leading thought in the name is "power with God and with men" (Gen. xxxii. 28): the former, "power with God," being the idea of the priesthood; the latter, "power with men," of the kingship, or perhaps more accurately, the kinghood, of the Bible.

2. The leading application of the name in the Old Testament is to the chosen people as a whole, who were called to be "a kinghood* of priests" (Exod. xix. 6).

The restricted use of it in the later times of the monarchy, as applied to the ten tribes in distinction from the southern minority, though it prevailed for several hundred years, and needs to be kept in mind in order to an intelligent reading of the later prophets, was only temporary, and finds its explanation in this, that while the division lasted, the majority claimed to be *the* people of God, the true "Israel."

3. The application of the personal name "Israel" to

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* It is important to remember that the word "kingdom" used in our version does not mean in this passage a community ruled over by a king, but a kingly community. The apostle Peter, following the LXX., renders it "a royal priesthood" (1 Pet. ii. 9). The royalty of kinghood referred to is of course no mere political notion, but the Bible idea of moral power over men's minds and hearts, such as is gained through the truth. (See John xviii. 37 and Rev. i. 6; xx. 6.)

the nation, as a whole, leads us to view the national history, as if it were that of an individual, from the *childhood* of the nation, when God called His Son out of Egypt (Hos. xi. 1), on through the period of its *adolescence*, in the times of Joshua and the Judges, when it had to battle with those outward obstacles which lie in the way of a youth who has his position in the world to make, up to the *prime of life*, which was reached in the days of the early kings, especially the reign of Solomon, when the nation touched its highest pinnacle of greatness; then downward through the slow steps of *decay*, traceable not to assaults from without, but to growing weakness within, until at last, after occasional vain efforts to renew the vigour of its youth, as in the times of the Maccabees, it sinks into *the grave* to which it long has been steadily advancing.

4. Israel is raised again from the dead under a new covenant (Heb. viii. 7–13). "It is sown a natural body"—"Israel according to the flesh"; "It is raised a spiritual body"—the Church, "the Israel of God" (Gal. vi. 16), spoken of in the Epistle of Peter as "a royal priesthood, an holy nation" (1 Pet. ii. 9), and in the book of Revelation claiming to have been made "kings and priests unto God" (Rev. i. 6). The ideal of Israel in the book of Genesis is at last realized in the Apocalypse.

III. THE TITLE "CHRIST."

1. The Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed, are Hebrew, Greek, and English equivalents. The associations of anointing were with health and beauty, grace and gladness. These being "the fruit of the Spirit," the anointing oil was the familiar symbol of the Holy Spirit's grace.

2. The term is applied in a general way to the patriarchs, and to Israel as a nation, in a few passages: 1 Chron. xvi. 22; Ps. lxxxiv. 9; Ps. cv. 15; Hab. iii. 13.

3. In a more special sense it is applied to individuals, especially priests and kings.* The priests were anointed as channels of "saving health"; the kings as channels of "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (See Rom. xiv. 17).

4. Both the nation as a whole, which was called to be "a kinghood of priests," and the individual priests and kings of the lines of Aaron and David, fell lamentably short of the Divine idea in the anointing. Hence *the* Anointed One, *the* Messiah, *the* Christ, yet to come, remained "the *Hope* of Israel."

5. When *the* Christ came, He fulfilled the Divine ideal

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* There is only one passage where anointing is mentioned in connection with the prophetical office (1 Kings xix. 16), whereas there are hundreds which connect it with the priestly and kingly offices.

of the anointed or Christ kings of the line of David, the anointed or Christ priests of the line of Aaron, and the anointed or Christ nation of Israel.

6. In fulfilling the Divine idea of the anointed *nation*, He became the Priest of the world, and the King of men. In HIM all nations of the earth were blessed, with health and beauty, grace and gladness.

7. Not only did He thus personally fulfil the destiny of Israel as a race, but He became the Head of a new spiritual family, who should through His grace collectively fulfil the destiny of Israel.

8. Accordingly we find that in the New Testament the term "Christ" is applied not only in a personal sense to Jesus of Nazareth, as the Antitype of the Christ *persons* of the Old Testament; but in a collective sense to the Church, as the antitype of the Christ *nation* of the Old Testament. As in the Old (see par. 2 above), so in the New, the cases are rare; but they are important. By keeping this in mind, we readily see the meaning of passages which, for want of understanding the usage, have presented almost insurmountable difficulty, *e.g.*, Col. i. 24; Gal. iii. 16*; Heb. xi. 26. (The last

* This passage has been appealed to most confidently as an illustration of inconsequential reasoning, quite incompatible with the idea of inspiration. The apostle is supposed to be arguing from the use of the singular "seed" in the words of the promise, that the reference must be to a single *person*, viz., Christ, overlooking or disregarding the fact that "seed," though singular in form, is collective in meaning. But it requires only a knowledge of the collective meaning of the word "Christ," to see that the blunder is entirely on the side of the critics. The apostle does not say "to thy seed, which is Jesus," but "to thy seed, which is *Christ*," referring

passage is specially remarkable, as a striking parallel to those quoted in par. 2).

9. It is interesting in this connection to observe the careful discrimination in the New Testament between the name *Jesus* and the title *Christ* in the frequent references to His body. The "body of Jesus" is invariably used in the literal sense, meaning the human body of our Lord (Matt. xxvii. 58; Mark xv. 43; Luke xxiii. 52; xxiv. 3; John xix. 38, 40; xx. 12; Heb. x. 10). The "body of Christ," on the other hand, is used in reference to "the Church, which is His body," in numerous and quite familiar passages.

10. "The body of Christ," bearing the collective as distinguished from the individual signification, is parallel with the collective name "Israel"; and just as there was an "Israel according to the flesh," and a spiritual Israel, so concerning the body of Christ we may say in the words of the apostle, "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." The spiritual body is, as we have seen, the Church of the New Testament. The natural body may be regarded as the Church of the Old Testament (see Acts vii. 38). Herein we see the appropriateness of the application of the title "Christ" to God's ancient people, and the naturalness of that refer-

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to the whole body, as appears very clearly from what follows: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Greek nor Jew, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female: for ye are *all* ONE *in Christ* Jesus." *There* is the unity the apostle is speaking of. It is the one seed including all: Greek and Jew, Barbarian, Scythian, bond and free. Understood in this its manifest sense, the inference is quite legitimate, as based on the use of a singular *collective* term.

ence in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where Moses is represented as "esteeming the reproach of *Christ* greater riches than the treasures of Egypt."

11. The foregoing *data* confirm greatly the view briefly suggested in the opening lecture* as to the typical relation of Israel as a people to the Holy One about to come in "the fulness of the times" to fulfil Israel's destiny. Professor Jowett, in his "Essay on the Interpretation of Scripture," says: "The time will come when educated men will be no more able to believe that the words, 'Out of Egypt have I called My son,' were *intended* by the prophet to refer to the return of Joseph and Mary out of Egypt, than, etc." He takes for granted that unless the prophet intended an application to the coming Christ, it is erroneous to make the application, as the Evangelist Matthew does. But it is evident that the learned critic is not "educated" enough on the subject on which he pronounces so decisively. Any one can of course see that the prophet refers to Israel, for he expressly says so: "When *Israel* was a child, then I loved him, and called My son out of Egypt." One does not require to belong to the class of "educated men" to see so far into the subject. But it does require a little education to see what the Evangelist evidently saw, that the relation of Israel to the coming Christ was similar to that of David to Him; and therefore, that what was said of the type could be legitimately applied to the antitype.

From this point of view, also, we can see how it comes to pass, that Israel as a nation and the coming Messiah

* Page 8.

are blended together in those prophecies of Isaiah which, on this very account, have been the subject of so much controversy. It has been a great weakness in that controversy that the positions of those who refer them to Israel as a nation, and of those who refer them to the Messiah, have been so generally regarded as mutually exclusive. And accordingly, when the party opposed to the Messianic interpretation points to such a passage as Isaiah xlix. 3: "Thou art My servant, O Israel," it is dealt with as if it disproved all Messianic reference in that most remarkable of all prophecies of Christ, beginning, "Behold, My servant shall deal prudently." But why should not the same principle be applied here which we have found of so frequent application elsewhere? Israel was the Christ people. Why should we then find difficulty, when we discover that *their history, as well as their prophecy, foreshadowed the Christ that was to come?* *

* From the same point of view fresh light is cast upon the enigmatical utterance of Caiaphas (John xi. 49, 50), which shows that there was one at least, even in those degenerate days, who dimly saw some connection between the fate of the nation, and that of the "One Man," whose cause was then under adjudication.

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